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DECIMON HÛŶDAS

A ROMANCE OF MARS.

SARA WEISS

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William B. Cairns Collection

of

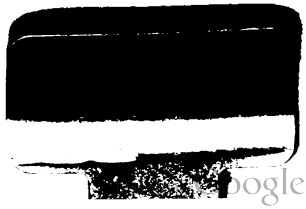
American Women Writers

1630-1900

William B. Cairns

Professor of English

University of Wisconsin-Madison



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Decimon Hûŷdas

A ROMANCE OF MARS

A Story of actual experiences in Ento (Mars) many centuries ago given to the Psychic

SARA WEISS

And by her transcribed automatically under the editorial direction of Spirit Carl De L'Ester

Illustrated with Six Original Drawings

THE AUSTIN PUBLISHING COMPANY
Rochester, New York
1906

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Rare Book
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Dedication

To my daughter Adelaide Carolyn Crosby, whose aspirations are in touch with my own, I dedicate this little story concerning persons and events of the Planet known to Earth people as Mars.

SARA WEISS.

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Note of Explanation



To those who may read this Romance of Ento* it may be well to say, that the relation of the story is the fulfillment of a promise made to me by an Ento spirit, known as Genessano Allis Immo, whose interpreter is Carl De L'Ester, counselor and guide of a spirit band known, on the spirit side of life, as the Evon Thiạ, which, in the English tongue, signifies "For Love's Sake."

By this spirit band I have been named Gentolạ, which is an Ento name of kindly significance.

If the readers of this little story, which concerns persons of our neighboring planet known to us as Mars, receive the pleasure experienced by me while listening to its recital, I shall be greatly gratified.

SARA WEISS.

* Mars.

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Glossary

Andûmaṇa—Supreme, Infinite One; Creator of all things.

Anatûzza Fûndoitsa—Ecclesiastical court.

Asmoṇa—A shrub of fine foliage, of insignificant blooms, but very fragrant.

Amatû—Estate of Oûman Mitsa.

Bûdas loṭa—Immensely lofty tree, whose foliage trembles incessantly.

Diafon Evoiha—Dwelling place of The Supreme One.

Eydas—A large night bird.

Feltah—An animal resembling a deer.

Flicksha—A beautiful gray and yellow singing bird.

Flûētas—Sacred bird resembling a peacock, but much larger.

Flûẏna—Resembles a rose; blooms of various colors.

Frydas—A goddess.

Iton Tsûma—Supreme ruler at the time the incidents related occurred.

Indalûfa—A shrub of large growth; blooms very fragrant and pretty.

Koidassa—Estate of the Nyassas.

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Litzen Rinạdạ—Institution for the education of novices.

Moûtsen ken ạvạ—Home of the Consecrated.

Nûỷạ—Goddess of Spring.

Phrạ—Death Messenger.

Raucca—A rather large, black bird.

Rỷzo entēvạh—Century.

Shạmạ—Egg.

Shạmạn—Egg shaped.

Stēfạ—Fish.

Tēmos Itạ—One of Ento's loftiest mountain peaks.

Tsoniạ—Sacred altar bloom; used as an offering.

Tymonas—God of the inner sanctuary of Temple Zim.

Voûhoidạ—Resembles a pipe organ.

Yaffa a lûỷtos—Truth and duty.

Zoitạ—A stringed instrument resembling a guitar.

Zymạ—A dovelike bird, seldom seen during the day.

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Introduction

Gentoļą ēmaną:—Nearly two of Earth's years have elapsed since I have had the privilege and pleasure of personally saluting you, which now I do with fullest assurance of a regard which magnifies itself, as I recall the experiences of those never to be forgotten days of yore and your loving endeavor in the interests of my people. You have been made to understand why, during this period, you have felt disinclined to commune with your spirit friends, who, nevertheless, have constantly been about you, guarding and guiding you along the devious ways of mortal existence. We rejoice with you that, at last, you are thought to be strong enough to resume association with the Evon Thią.

During the past year, one of the lessons that you, to a degree, have been perfecting, is the all important one of self-control, which is very nearly allied to the mental quality termed concentration; and until mortals have made these two traits a part of their selfhood, they are at the mercy of every adverse circumstance and emotion: consequently, they are as driftwood tossed hither and thither on the pulsing tide of human existence, whose waves

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ever are bearing them onward towards a shoreless eternity. Other lessons, unconsciously, you have been incorporating into the very warp and woof of your being; and now we find you prepared to take upon yourself the accomplishment of such duties as are a part of your life work.

In fulfillment of my promise to some time relate to you a Romance of Ento, which, alas! is founded upon actual occurrences, I shall be obliged to recall scenes and events of days long past, happily never to return,—days so filled with anguish that men and women, the actual characters of the story, who long have dwelt in Ento's spirit spheres, even yet shrink from recalling memories which would becloud the joys of their present existence. While reading the story, my brother Inidoṛa and I were so impressed by its pathetic and tragic features, that we are yet able to recall it almost in its entirety. By the Entoans it has ever been regarded as a little classic in which are portrayed, not only phases of human nature, but religious and social events of a bygone time: events tinged with the sacredness ever attached to sorrowful personal experiences.

Before beginning the recital of the story as related by Decimon Hûẏḍaṣ, I desire to touch

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upon some points which may render more intelligible some statements and expressions, which otherwise might confuse the minds of those not at all versed in Spirit philosophy.

In planetary language, which all advanced spirits understand, Evon Thia (For Love's Sake) is the watchword of all engaged in endeavor to uplift humanity on both the physical and spirit planes of being; and such spirits ever strive to unfold such mentalities as are sensitive to their approach: for only through sensitives can the truth of the continuity of existence be demonstrated.

In every human being are the infolded qualities constituting the sensitive, or mediumistic, condition; but, as no two personalities are alike, so no two sensitives are alike: hence spirits are obliged to accommodate their efforts to the individual peculiarities of sensitives; and often their efforts prove ineffective, or are wholly misunderstood, thus creating confusion and skepticism in many minds.

At the period when Man on any planet becomes a living Soul—that is, a soul dominated by Immortal Spirit—consciously or unconsciously he enters into relation with the spirit side of life, ever recognizing only what the plane of his development can assimilate. On

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Ento, as on other planets inhabited by spiritualized humans, this process of unfoldment of spirit perceptivity, or sensitiveness, has ever been recognized as something apart from the objective experiences of all observing its phenomena; and endless have been the conjectures concerning its origin. When experienced by persons of exalted piety, its source has ever been regarded as Deific; but when experienced by irreligious and immoral persons its source has been considered only evil. But to you, as to many others, has come the knowledge that in the universe there is but one Principle, which is wholly good, and that the expression of seeming evil is but the expression of an unevolved condition. Admitting the correctness of this statement inclines one to be charitable towards those who, through ignorance or weakness of purpose, fail to fulfill the Law of Love.

I shall conclude this rather inconclusive introduction to a Romance of Ento by saying that I, an Ento spirit, am aided in expressing myself by an Earth-born, Carl De L'Ester, who is counselor and guide of a band of the Evon Thia; and I am so presumptuous as to hope that my recital of the little story may, in the minds of the thoughtful, awaken an interest

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in peoples so clearly resembling themselves and in a planet which, like their own fair Earth, was, in the fullness of time, thrown from the glowing heart of the great central magnet, the sun of our solar system, into space and held there by the Omnipotent, Intelligent Force pervading, not only all worlds, but every atom of a boundless universe.

GENESSANO ALLIS IMMO.

Once a mortal man of Ento; which is known to Earth-borns as the Planet Mars.

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STORY OF
DECIMON HUYDAS
AS RELATED BY
GENESSANO ALLIS IMMO

CHAPTER I.

Twilight's gray, mysterious shadows enveloped as with a dusky veil one of the loveliest suburbs of Lēonitą Tŷlû. Overhead the lamps of Astranola* gleamed downward through fleecy, flying clouds, which thinly veiled their sacred fires. From off the bosom of Lake Shaman, whose rippling waves softly kissed its pebbly shore, floated the sweet strains of Zoitąs,† accompanying the voices of youths and maidens who sang a tender love song. From out the branches of some great Bûdąs trees, embowering a stately residence near the lake shore, cooed the soft, plaintive, quavering notes of a Zŷmas,‡ whose evening

*Home of Deific Ones.
†Stringed musical instruments.
‡Dovelike bird, yet larger.

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song ever awakens tenderest emotions and memories. On either side of the residence beautiful fountain groups threw into the quiet air their silvery spray, which returned to great white marble basins with the pattering, soothing sound of gently falling rain. From out the hearts of myriad blooms, the breaths of the wandering breeze drew their subtle fragrance to be borne as a sweet night offering to the gentle goddess Nûyạ, whose life-giving touch had called them into beauteous expression.

As twilight deepened into night, save for the rustling of the whispering leaves of the towering Bûdạs trees there was unbroken silence. Suddenly, from out the stillness, came the sound of swiftly running feet; and a moment later, hand in hand, the forms of a boy and girl like flying shadows sped towards a nearby temple, whose brilliant lights poured their radiance into the outer darkness, which yet was not deep enough to quite obscure the pallid beauty of the admirable architecture and exquisitely sculptured exterior of the sacred edifice.

As they neared the temple the boy, Invạloû, breathlessly whispered: "Oh, Fronạ, I fear we are late for the offering and the High Priest will be angry with us,—and, Fronạ

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Valseta—A Flower of Mars used as an Altar Offering.

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dear, it is my fault. I am very sorry, Fronạ. Say that you forgive me, Fronạ, and I will never again behave so foolishly."

Fronạ said not a word but clasped closer the trembling hand of the boy, and ạ moment later they hastily entered an apartment at the rear of the temple, where were assembled the offering bearers laden with grains, fruits and flowers.

As the two tardy ones entered the apartment they observed in the glances of their companions an expression of sympathy and alarm. They quickly placed themselves in position in the procession, standing with downcast eyes and abashed faces under the peculiar scrutiny of the High Priest. Presently three strokes of the temple bell broke the painfully embarrassing silence; then the High Priest said, "Invạloû, Fronạ, you will remain where you are until I return." Again the silvery tones of the temple bell pealed out. Noiselessly the temple doors moved aside. The High Priest entered and moved towards the altar, its white sculptured beauty towering to the great dome through whose transparent red and golden Diafon Evoihạ* the swiftly flying

*Dwelling place of Gods.

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Moon, Entelą, threw beams of faint effulgence. Softly the strains of the Voûhoidą† broke the stillness; and, as its vibrant tones, accompanied by the intoning voices of the singers, filled the temple with sweetest melody, the offering-bearers entered and with slow rhythmic movements drew near the altar, arranging themselves on either side of the High Priest Zeydon Gamalą. As the attendants removed the offerings of the previous day the children replaced them with golden grains, fruits, and the red and yellow blooms of the sacred Tsoiną and Valsetą.

Among the throng of worshippers were the parents of Invąloû and Froną, who soon perceived that their children were not among the offering-bearers. Quickly their eyes were filled with surprise and their loving hearts with a nameless dread lest some evil thing had befallen their darlings, their Invąloû and Froną.

As all Entoans well know, it is not permissible that any one shall enter or depart during the ministry of the sacred functions of the temple; but as the service proceeded the alarm of the parents of the absent ones in-

†Very like a pipe organ.

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creased; and as the last Rạû was pronounced and the procession, preceded by the High Priest, passed from the rear of the temple, they hastened towards their home, where, to their great dismay, they learned that their children had gone to the temple prepared to take their allotted part in the evening service to the goddess Frŷdas,—she whose quickening breath woos into perfection grains, fruits and flowers, and whose lamplight now gleamed and twinkled in the far-off night sky.

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CHAPTER II.

A long line of worthy ancestry in time found expression in two brothers who, with their families, occupied the residence of an estate known as Koidassą; and truly their home was one of love, tranquillity and contentment. Lûvon, the elder, and Dammą, the younger brother, were sons of one of the most distinguished families of a southern land, known in their time as the province Fondelek, a region then, as now, sufficiently fertile to sustain a dense population. A son cemented the union of Lûvon and his admirable wife, Tillēne; and a daughter, fair and sweet as a Rodel bud, graced the marriage of Dammą and his beautiful and gracious spouse, Avąnną.

The two families were as one in all that concerned their happiness and interests. No thought of a separateness of residence ever occurred to any member of either family. Generation after generation of the Nyassąs had lived, loved, and gone into the Silence within the walls of the great edifice Koidassą, which was so stanchly built as to defy time and the elements.

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Lûvon and Tillēne, also Dammą and Avanną, were united in marriage in the same hour; but through Andûmanąs creative power, Invąloû, the boy, came into existence two years earlier than He bestowed upon Dammą and Avąnną a daughter, who from her earliest infancy was regarded as wondrously beautiful. The passing years added new charms to a countenance and form of surpassing loveliness; yet no more admirable were they than the gracious and fine nature which animated her expressive face and lighted the depths of her empurpled eyes. And now that childhood was merging into maidenhood, Froną Nyassą presented a personality so uncommon as to attract the attention and admiration of all beholders. There was about her a subtle charm and a nameless something which set her apart from other girls of her age but did not in any manner detract from her ingenuous simplicity, which was a noticeable trait of her character. Being of a mixed race she inherited the golden hair, fair skin and empurpled eyes of her beautiful mother; but in form, stature and mental traits she greatly resembled her stately father, who was of the dark skinned race of Wend.

Invąloû, the dark eyed, dark skinned, dusky

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haired boy, was noticeably like his Wend father, who was a man of great nobility of feature, form and bearing: a man whose just, gentle, loving nature found full expression in his beloved son, who in his approaching manhood promised a complete fulfillment of all the hopes and desires of his fond parents.

By their parents Invaloû and Frona were regarded as children, as indeed they yet were, —but as children whose footsteps were nearing the threshold of maturity. Their future held for them and their nearest and dearest ones such immeasurable sorrow that I, who relate this story of their trials, shrink with tearful eyes and reluctant speech from its recital. That I relate it at all is that we of a happier time may remember and appreciate the merciful kindness of our Creator, who, through His boundless love for us, hath declared that no more shall His offending children offer themselves, or be offered as atonement for sin to appease His righteous wrath because of their transgressions of His laws. That we who so love our cherished ones that all else is as nothing shall hold them in our embraces as in our hearts until Death, the Inexorable One, shall woo them into perpetual Silence, is such a priceless blessing that with every thought of

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our minds, with every breath of our lives, we should remember and adore Andûmaṇa's mercy for His ungrateful and thoughtless children. May this little story be to all who may read it a reminder of their duty to Him who hath so tempered justice with mercy that the dread past is dead and gone forever. If this end may be attained I, Decimon Hûŷdaṣ, shall not have written in vain.

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CHAPTER III.

For a moment the announcement that the children had certainly gone to the temple paralyzed the senses of the terror-stricken parents; then, with keenest apprehension, they hastened towards the nearby residence of the High Priest. As they ran no word was spoken, but when they came into his presence the mother breathlessly, tearfully cried, "O Sacredness, knowest thou where are our dear ones, our Invaloû, and Frona? They were seen hastening towards the temple, but we saw them not in the service, and on our return home we found them not."

For a little Zeydon did not reply, but his sternly set face and lowering brow drove the hot blood from their faces back to their wildly beating hearts. Then Lûvon and Damma, approaching him more nearly, humbly knelt at his feet and in tones of immeasurable anguish besought him to speak lest their breaking hearts should hasten them and their dear consorts into the Silence.

Then Zeydon, in whom neither love, sympathy nor other tender emotion seemed to have ever found expression, coldly and sternly

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uttered words so appalling that his suppliants cowered prone at his feet.

"Lûvon, Dammą, Tillēne, and Avąnną," he said, "lately I have observed that the members of your household, including your son and daughter, have grown careless and unobservant of your duties towards our Holy Religion; and, what is quite as censurable, your offerings to Andûmaną, the Supreme One, and to the Deific Ones of Astranolą have so decreased in value and frequency that no longer may such offenses pass unnoticed or the offenders go unpunished."

"Recently, in the inner sanctuary, I, Zeydon, communed with the god Soimą, whom ye know of as the messenger between Andûmaną and those of his children whom he hath given into my charge, and for whose good or evil conduct I, to a degree, am responsible. To me, Zeydon, the sacred messenger hath declared that for those who transgress the laws of the Holy Writings adequate reparation must be made, else life, the chiefest possession, may be withdrawn from offenders.

"Since you have shown yourselves unfitted to rear Andûmanąs* children it is my duty to take them under my especial care, that they

*Supreme One.

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may be taught the holy mysteries of the temple service and as priest and priestess learn that Andûmaṇa and the dwellers in Astranolą are not to be lightly regarded or worshipped merely with the lips."

As Zeydon ceased speaking he folded his arms, inclined his haughty head, and for the first time since their entrance into his presence closely regarded the stricken ones, whose pitiful moans and shuddering forms might have touched even the vengeful gods. In the depths of his dark eyes was an expression inscrutable and startling. It was as though they were very abysses in which smouldering fires luridly burned; lighting up the dark face of a still youthful and exceedingly handsome man.

After some moments he again spoke: "Arise," he said, in a low peremptory tone, "Go,—the children will remain with me,—and remember that Andûmaṇa's mercy may not be strained. Adore him ceaselessly, else he may demand a greater sacrifice than your yielding to his holy service Invą̈loû and Froṇą."

Then he turned away and, drawing aside the heavy silken door drapery, disappeared.

For a time only the sobbing moans of the bereft parents broke the profound stillness of

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the great, sumptuous apartment; then Lûvon and Dammą arose, staggering like drunken men, so overcome were they by the immeasurable disaster which had so suddenly, so unexpectedly overtaken them and their dearest ones. Raising from the floor their almost swooning consorts they sustained their trembling steps into the outer air, which suddenly had grown damp and chill, and through the night half blindly found their way to their desolated home.

During the period in which these events occurred, to observant persons it became apparent that among the most highly educated and cultured peoples of Ento there was a rapidly growing tendency towards an apathetic interest in the observances of our Holy Religion and, what was still more deplorable, a positive protest, approaching rebellion, against a certain rite which ever since the establishment of our Holy Religion had never been questioned. Its observance was a commandment of the Sacred Writings; and clearly there was occasion for this commandment, else Andûmaną, the Supreme One, the Just One, would not have uttered it; and only one wholly impious or bereft of reason would have dared to oppose himself, or herself, against a decree of

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the creator, who is the destroyer of all things existing contrary to his divine will.

Being a commandment of the Sacred Writings, this rite had ever been the most forceful of all religious observances; and thus for the transgressions of the people, or to appease the vengeful anger of the mighty ones who dwell in Astranola, the dearest and loveliest of Ento's youths and maidens went into the Silence, whence returns no sound of loving voices, no word of gentle speech.

I, Decimon Hûŷdas, who write this story of a bygone time, desire that I may do so in a reverent manner: and may Andûmana forgive if, unwittingly, I may write aught that shall mar its truthfulness. Had it pleased Him to have created me then rather than on a more recent day, I can not say but that I might have been no wiser than were those of His children who, through their constant dread of the possibility of losing through the sacrificial rite that which they valued more than all else, passed naturally from a state of incessant anxiety to one of fierce despair; and then, rather than longer endure the ceaseless strain and agony of apprehension lest Andûmana, through His messengers, demand the lives of

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their cherished ones, went unbidden with them into the Silence.

So prevalent became this protest against the sacred sacrificial rite that indignation and alarm seized upon the minds of the priesthood, who appealed to the government to prohibit the monstrous crime. Very positive decrees were forthwith issued, forbidding the people to further engage in such reprehensible conduct. Strange to say, this interference of the government appeared to afford an added impulse to the mania.

The argument offered was, that as existence was not continuous, was not it preferable to at once go with their dear ones into the Silence than for a life-time to endure the agonizing dread of having them torn from their embraces to suffer the torture of the sacrificial rite.

Who, in these happier years when our dear ones are permitted to live out days assigned them by the Supreme One, can find it in their hearts to censure those unhappy ones whose minds gave way under their intolerable burden of well founded apprehension; for during the period of which I write the priesthood had grown so pious and so zealous that the altar fires of Ento's numerous temples were con-

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tinuously kept ablaze, that thus they might express their adoration for Andûmaṇa and the Deific Ones, as also their reverence for the rites of our holy religion, established by the Creator, who, when He so wills, may cause to be destroyed the work of His hands.

It was during the early inception of the lamentable suicidal and homicidal mania which impelled so many loving ones to hasten with their children into the Silence that Invaloû and Froṇa were separated from their parents, who well knew that years must elapse ere they might hope to once more gaze upon the forms of their adored children. During the years of their noviciate only the priesthood would be aware of the place of their abode; and in their bitter sorrow these loving parents lamented ceaselessly that they too had not for themselves and their dearest ones chosen the oblivion of death.

I would not have the readers of this story imagine that I write as my fancy dictates. Not so: through the courtesy of a descendant of the Nyassaṣ I have at my disposal certain records relating to the occurrences of which I write; but of much that they contain which would add to the interest of the narrative I hesitate to make free use, for the reason that

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I do not feel that I have a right to reveal to the living that which the dead once held sacred. Thus I shrink a little from alluding to the distress of Invaloû and Frona when they realized that they were not free to return to their home and parents. Their cries for succor, their frantic struggles to escape, were indeed pitiful. Filled with terror they clung to each other until attendants of the High Priest, not ungently, removed them from the apartment and hastened them away from the temple,—away from the scenes of their care-free and happy childhood, away from home and beloved parents, away to a not far distant institution devoted to the special education of those of Ento's youths and maidens who in time would minister as priests and priestesses in temples dedicated to the Supreme Creator, the Holy One, Who gazes from the portals of His shining abode upon the children of His love, whom He rewards or chastises in accordance with His will.

As we may not for the present follow the unhappy children into their new surroundings and experiences, we will turn our compassionate gaze towards Koidassa, where four stricken beings, crushed by the weight of an immeasurable disaster, ceaselessly moaned out

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the agony which well-nigh tore their hearts assunder. The great house which for never-to-be-forgotten years had echoed and re-echoed with the joyous songs and laughter of the lost ones had suddenly grown as silent as the footfalls of the dread god Phrạ,* whose all-embracing arms bear into the Silence the infant which like a sweet Roinạ bud clings to its mother's breast, the youth and maiden who like full blown rodels exhale the fragrance of their innocence and beauty, and the aged who on His breast close their bedimmed and weary eyes in endless sleep. Like restless shadows weeping and sighing, the parents stole through the spacious apartments. Everywhere were reminders of their children. Upon a pedestal was a sculptured statue of Invạloû, no purer in its whiteness than the life animating the smiling lips of their beloved boy. In a draped niche was also a snowy representation of Fronạ, so admirable in form and expression as to have left nothing to be added to its perfection. In the apartments devoted to the instruction and amusement of their darlings the two mothers wandered to and fro. There, was a book, over whose pictured illustrations their

*Death.

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dusky and golden-haired children had side by side spent many happy moments; and it was now lifted reverently to tremulous, loving lips. Here, was some childish treasure, carefully laid away by Invaloû or Frona; this was gazed upon through blinding tears and pressed close to wounded hearts which nevermore might pillow the dusky or golden-haired head of the owner.

Only *Yodis vahûa had yet elapsed since, with the suddenness and unexpectedness of a lightning flash in a clear sky, their children had been torn from them; but as their tearful eyes wandered from one object to another they reckoned the days as lingering years. So appalling, so overwhelming, was the calamitous occurrence which had come into their lives that it presented a certain grotesque unreality. They existed as though in a dreadful dreaming state, from which they thought they must awaken to find their dear ones in their arms. The days that held for them no Invaloû, no Frona, were as naught but haunting hallucinations; and the nights were filled with darkness and despair. Thus, days and nights merged into each other, bearing mute witness to the

*Eleven days.

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unspeakable anguish of the two mothers, Tillēne and Avanna. For Lûvon and Dammą there was no future: only wearisome days and nights of an objectless existence; then some time would come the Silence, beyond which there was nothing. Indeed, for the grief-stricken parents only the memories of the past presented a semblance of happiness or of reality. Certainly in the past there had been the ever present fear of the sacrificial rite; but they and their household had strictly fulfilled the Sacred Commandments: their offerings, contrary to Zeydon's statements, had ever been such of their possessions as they had prized most highly; so they said to themselves and to each other, "Surely the just and mighty gods will not demand from us an atonement for the transgressions of others." To Andûmaną, the Supreme One, they constantly had offered their profoundest adoration because He had given into their keeping two of His children, who to them were as priceless jewels for whose welfare and safety they gladly would have yielded all their possessions,—aye, even life itself! Thus, through the years, they had so reassured themselves and each other that their fears for their children's safety had never assumed sufficient

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tangibility to more than cast a faint shadow athwart their tranquility. Of the possibility of the calamity which now encompassed them and their dearest ones they never had entertained a thought. In all past time seldom had Andûmaṇa, through His messengers, expressed a command that a certain youth or maiden should enter the temple service; indeed, always more candidates for the sacred office had offered themselves than were accepted; thus, to these parents the taking away of their children was inexplicable. True, the High Priest Zeydon had accused them of remissness in their religious duties; but of any observance unfulfilled they were unconscious.

In their distress and perplexity they resolved to appeal, through the then Supreme Ruler, Iton Tsûma, to the Most High Priest Moûkaṛa, of the Most Sacred Temple Zim. Commending to the care of the Deific Ones their unhappy consorts, they hastened to the capital city Dạo, where, through the Supreme Ruler, they offered to the Most High Priest, for the uses of the Temple Zim, all their vast wealth if thus they might secure the release of their children; but Moûkaṛa refused to interfere between them and their guardian High Priest, who was accounted a most pious and

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wise man who must know better than they what was best for those under his charge. In other temples they made rich offerings, imploring the messengers of Andûmaṇa to bear to Him their supplications that Invaloû and Froṇa might be returned to them, not so much for their own happiness as for that of the broken-hearted mothers.

All in vain were their offerings and supplications. With aching hearts and bowed heads they returned to their blighted home and woeful consorts, with whom they strove to patiently endure the passing days and years which for them held naught but incessant anxious longing for the beloved ones who could come to them no more. Not even the loving sympathy of relatives and friends lifted from their hearts the burthen of their hopeless grief, which would cease only when death should bear them into the Silence, whither so many with their dear ones were rushing unbidden and whither they, too, would have gone had it not been that they cherished a faint hope of sometime, somehow, beholding again the dear faces of their children.

At that time so appalling had grown the strange death mania, that it seemed to be in the thought of almost every one. In its earlier

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stage it was confined to those possessing children; but so pernicious is unrighteous example that later many whose conditions were not to their liking became fatally impressed with the idea of self-destruction, and apparently without hesitation they gave back to their Creator that which to them had grown to be a burthen.

Andûmaṇa, perceiving the unreasoning despair of His children, who were as the blind leading the blind, resolved to reveal to them His boundless love and pity for their distraught condition. At His command the mighty god Tymonas sped to the Most Sacred Temple Zim and in the inner sanctuary, to the Most High Priest Moûkaṛa, the inexpressibly beneficent message was delivered, that henceforth only voluntary human sacrifice would find acceptance with the Creator of Ento's children; that on His altars only animals, grains, fruits, and red and golden-hued tsoniạ blooms, typical of His abode, should ever again be offered; that as temple offerings His children should, as heretofore, give according to their possessions; and that at once self-destruction and destruction of the lives of others must at once cease.

As no one dared, or even desired to disobey

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a 'command of the Supreme One, the mania came to an end.

Only the peoples of that woeful time could have realized the full significance of this revelation of Andûmaṇa's 'love and pity for His children. Suddenly, from the very depths of despair which through ‡Ryzo-entevah had grown unendurable, the people found themselves lifted to a condition of happiness they had never dreamed of, much less hoped for; and so supreme and overwhelming was their joy that for a time it was akin to delirium. We of this happier time can scarcely realize the state of their minds. No longer were their children regarded as a blessing which they must hold in loose hands, as on the morrow they might be torn from their embraces to be laid upon the sacrificial altar. Now, their children were their own,—aye, their very own! No more would their minds and hearts be filled with awful dread, their thoughts with ceaseless terror; and, for a 'time, the consciousness that all living things must at last go into the Silence was forgotten. The greater joy submerged the lesser sorrow.

‡A century.

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CHAPTER IV.

Gentola ēmana:—The mortal—immortal is a marvelous combination of the God and the human: 'inheriting all the characteristics of all the humans who have preceded him, truly he is *multum in parvo.*

No, I am not acquainted with the Latin tongue, but De L'Ester is; and through his instruction I am coming more nearly in touch with the language and thought of some of the peoples of your planet. So be not surprised should 'my Ento tongue attempt to utter a word or phrase of some one of your astonishingly numerous languages.

I have been told that thinkers of your planet recognize the fact, 'that as peoples progress from lower to higher stages of civilization they incline to simplicity of expression and oneness of language. On our side of life we observe that the 'language or languages of the peoples of any planet positively indicate the stage of their civilization.

On Ento, as you are aware, but one language is spoken. True, among the less cultured of our people there are what De L'Ester terms provincialisms and inelegancies of

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speech; but really we have but one language.

You will pardon me if I say that your own language is very difficult of application, many words offering meanings so varied as to be confusing to a foreigner like myself; but time will accomplish for your planet what it has already accomplished for Ento and for other worlds, and in some coming age Earth's greatly progressed peoples will speak but one language.

You, I perceive, are wondering why I am prefacing to-day's recital with extraneous expressions. I do so not without motive. We found you too disquieted to concentrate your attention upon our work, and we must request you in future to suppress all emotion, as it seriously interferes with our control of your organism.

Now you are tranquil. Strive to be attentive, so that you may grasp not only my meaning but also my construction of sentences, which, I am aware, are not so clearly expressed as I could desire.

SPIRIT GENESSANO ALLIS IMMO.

Koidassa, the estate of the Nyassas, which is still the home of a near descendant of that

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family, verged on the limits of an opulent city of Ento, known then, as now, as Lēonitą Tŷlû, which for a considerable distance extended along the shore of Lake Shaman*, near which was the residence of the brothers Lûvon and Dammą Nyassą. In Lēonita Tŷlû were a number of beautiful temples which are still reckoned among Ento's finest expressions of architecture. One especially noticeable, which still is known as *Yaffa ą Lûŷtos, stood amid a lovely garden of shrubbery and blooming plants. At intervals beautiful statues, singly or in group, added their snowy whiteness to the scene. Fountains of exquisite loveliness threw into the quiet air myriad jets of sparkling water, whose falling spray caught, as in silvery meshes, the fragrance of the wealth of many-hued blossoms. Pairs of majestic ‡fluētąs, the sacred birds of the Deific Ones, strayed through the spacious grounds, their widespread plumage glowing like jewels amid the verdure. Overhead, among the towering Bûdas trees, bright plumaged, sweet throated birds sang love

†Egg-shaped.
*Truth and Duty.
‡Resembling peacocks.

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songs to their mates, while droning †Eydąs sucked from the hearts of odorous blooms their stores of nectar.

Intruders into this secluded spot were of rare occurrence; none, save its keepers being privileged to enter it unbidden. Now, along its quiet pathways a stately form clothed in priestly garments paced to and fro. A strikingly handsome man was this priest, who, with bowed head, loosely clasped hands, and apparently unseeing eyes, walked as though lost to all save his thoughts, which at last impelled him to exclaim in accents of intense emotion: "So beautiful! So beautiful! She has grown so wondrously beautiful! May the gods be merciful to me;—for I love her, I madly love her! I, Zeydon, whose vows set me apart from the love of woman; I, Zeydon, who have deemed myself as passionless, as cold as the snows upon *Tēmos Itą—aye, as passionless as the breathless dead—I, Zeydon, find my traitorous heart so rent assunder by conflicting emotions that I stand dazed and trembling in the presence of an influence so overwhelm-

†Large and beautiful insects resembling humming birds.

*One of Ento's loftiest mountains.

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ing that I know not where or which way to turn for safety!"

Panting as though in terror of some threatened danger, he for a moment looked about him, then he resumed his restless pacing to and fro, to and fro. Suddenly he paused threw up his hands and with eyes turned towards Astranola, in a voice full of anguish, he prayed: "Oh ye Deific Ones, who know naught of the passions of men and women; ye messengers between the Creator and the created; ye who alone may approach the presence of the Supreme One, I implore your pity for one who is the most wretched of Andûmana's children! Bear to Him my humble supplication that He may call me into the Silence ere in my despair I may go thither unbidden!"

While this agonizing entreaty issued from his quivering lips his dark luminous eyes and trembling hands remained upraised towards †Astranola, and like a statue he stood motionless.

Across the beauty of verdure and bloom the last golden beams of Andûmana's shining abode pierced the shadows of approaching

†Abode of Deific Ones.

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twilight. Deeper, denser, grew the shadows, and the dark veil of night enshrouded the white beauty of the temple, the groups of snowy statuary and the loveliness of the flowers. One by one, golden gleams of the Lamps of Astranolą stole through the fleecy clouds, screening the portals of the glorious home of the Shining Ones, and the hush of night was everywhere.

Still Zeydon, with upraised hands and wide open eyes, stood motionless. Suddenly a violent tremor shook him as the wind shakes the white, frail Roiną blooms. Arousing as though from a profound stupor, he stared about him in a bewildered manner; then, like a torrent, consciousness rushed in upon his senses, and in tones of awe and amazement he breathlessly whispered.

"Can it be? Can it be? Ah, no, it can not be true! For not even in the Inner Sanctuary, where I have been shown glimpses of Astranolą, have I seen aught more wondrously beautiful than was this land of my marvelous dream, which seemed as real as aught my eyes ever have gazed upon. Ah me! I am growing strangely fanciful,—my disturbed senses are misleading me into a realm of unrealities. May the merciful gods preserve me from an

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utterly lost mind! * * * But alas! I deserve no good thing through their beneficence.

"But I will not, I dare not, think of the deplorable state into which I have fallen! No: I will think of my dream, if dream it was; and ere the memory of it may vanish as has vanished my peace of mind, I will strive to recall what I may of its incomparable loveliness.

"As I walked I drew near the sculptured form of the sylvan god Dēonadạs; and, as through the intervening shrubbery I caught a glimpse of the joyous smile on his curved lips, I asked my tortured self, Shall I ever again on my lips wear a smile of serene content? Then into the agony of my waking stole a blessed sleep, and I seemed to behold a land diversified by mountains, hills and vales, over which rested a soft, silvery radiance so wondrous that no poor words of mine can describe its matchless beauty. Through the verdure-clad vales flowed streams of sparkling water bordered by innumerable blooming plants, whose loveliness and exquisite fragrance shame into insignificance these poor blooms I have thought so admirable. And, wonder of wonders, I seemed to behold everywhere men, women and children clothed in white, shining

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raiment of exceeding beauty. They were engaged in pursuits too manifold to be enumerated; but all had countenances expressive of supreme happiness and contentment.

O land of my dream where I seemed to find the loved and lost ones of my sinless, happy childhood and of later years, during which my only thought was of the glory of our holy religion! Wert thou as real as this sorrowful Ento world not for one moment would I hesitate to enter unbidden thy portals, and thus end this torture of body and mind which consumes me."

At that moment the musical notes of Temple bells smote the stillness of the night, and Zeydon, arousing from the reverie into which he had fallen, with a sigh walked slowly away through the darkness towards his residence, through whose windows lights were pouring their soft radiance into the outer darkness.

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CHAPTER V.

Northward, beyond the confines of Lēonitạ Tẏlû, a great structure, rather a group of structures, occupied a space of upland surrounded by substantial walls and set thickly with towering trees and an undergrowth of shrubbery, amid which were many sinuous walks and shaded nooks.

In one of these nooks sat a youth whose demeanor denoted a greatly disturbed mind, as with downcast eyes and drawn brow he scanned the pages of a book resting on his knees. Suddenly, with an impatient movement, he pushed away from his forehead his dusky hair, and, springing to his feet with a sort of breathless vehemence, he exclaimed, "It is false! It is false! Andûmanạ, Thou Creative One surely Thou hast not brought into being Thy children only that they may live, love and suffer and then go into the Silence! I cannot, I will not—"

"Invạloû, Invạloû," called a low, sweet voice. "Where are thou Invạloû?"

In answer to the startled, impulsive, "Here am I," a young girl stole swiftly through the shrubbery and came eagerly forward into the

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outreaching arms of Invaloû, who clasped her to his breast murmuring in impassioned tones, "My Frona, My Frona," and for a little no other word was spoken.

Then the golden-haired head drew gently away from the arms that would have detained it against his breast, and her empurpled eyes looked with a troubled expression into Invaloû's face, which had grown full of alarmed questioning.

"What is it Frona, dearest? What has so disturbed thee that thou tremblest and art as white as Roina blooms? Tell me quickly, for I am in no mood to be tranquil while thou art so disturbed."

A hot wave of color swept over the fair face of Frona as she hesitatingly, tremulously, said, "My Invaloû I know not how to answer thee, for through an experience of yesterday I am as one partly bereft of a right mind. Heart of my heart, I have sought thee that thou mayest know that the High Priest Zeydon hath spoken to me words of such strange import that my mind and heart are yet filled with terror and measureless surprise."

Ere she ceased speaking, Invaloû's face paled and in his eyes was an angry gleam. "What said he to thee?" he questioned.

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Timidly, shrinkingly Fronạ replied, "It was at the close of the examination of the advanced class that as I with the other novices were leaving his presence, he said: 'Fronạ, thou wilt remain; I have further instruction for thee.' Fain would I have fled from his presence but I dared not; so with downcast eyes, and trembling limbs, I remained standing before him. It seemed a long time ere he broke the silence, and then, in a strangely agitated voice, he said: 'Fronạ, more than three years have elapsed since in the inner sanctuary of Yaffa ạ Lûŷtos, my guardian god, Soimạ, instructed me as to thy future and that of thy cousin Invạloû. I will not say that I was wholly pleased in taking upon myself the discharge of a duty which entailed much that has not been agreeable; but you, who have learned the meaning of obedience, will understand that I could not consult either my own inclination or yours."

Then he hesitated, and as I questioningly glanced at his face I saw that he was gazing intently at my own, and in much confusion I quickly averted my incautious gaze, which saw in his eyes and face an expression which wellnigh stilled the beating of my heart. After a moment he continued: 'That I have been

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greatly interested in your progress as a student of the mysteries of our holy religion you, I believe, are aware. Indeed your growth and unfoldment have added a special charm to my existence; and the knowledge, Fronạ, that I may have thee ever near me fills my mind and heart with such delight that I count the days valueless in which I do not behold thee. Have I alarmed thee, Fronạ? Child, child, I would not, to double the days of my existence, harm one golden hair of thy beauteous head. So tranquilize thyself, thou timid one, for I would speak to thee of another, and most marvellous matter.'

"Ere he ceased his strange speech I had grown so faint that scarcely could I sustain my trembling form, and, doubtless, he perceiving my distress, thought it wise to speak of something less personal.

"Allowing me a brief interval in which to regain my selfpossession, he resumed: 'Previous to coming here, doubtless, thee and thy cousin Invạloû learned, through thy parents and the speech of others, something of the widespread unrest of Ento's unhappy peoples, which later resulted in a general and positive protest against further sacrifice of their children, with whom many parents in their

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madness were hastening unbidden into the Silence. But you do not know that, finally, the mania so overstepped all bounds that the priesthood and the government were in despair as to what should be done to end this deplorable condition, through which an unreasoning frenzy sought to subvert a rite of our holy religion, which, with other observances, the children of Ento ever have recognized as righteous and in accord with the holy writings. In this extremity, out of which no one found a way for the betterment of the desperate situation, a most unexpected and unhoped for deliverance came. Andûmaṇa, the Supreme One, beholding the wretchedness of his unwise children, summoned to his presence the great god Tŷmonas, commanding him to bear to Moûkaṛa, the most high priest of the most sacred Temple Zim, a new revelation of his love, which through him should be made known to all peoples. Moûkaṛa, having received the marvelous revelation, hastened to impart it to the priesthood, then through a general proclamation to the people, who for a time were so overwhelmed with surprise and joy as to be unable to realize that Andûmaṇa had declared that no more should His children be unwillingly offered as sacrifices to appease

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His anger, or to test their obedience to his will.

"'The message was that henceforth only animals, grains, fruits and red and golden Tsoiṇa and Valseṭa blooms, emblems of his abode, should be laid not as sacrifices, but as offerings of remembrance, upon his altars; that he desired that his children should grow purer in mind and heart, nobler in their lives, more loving and just in their conduct; for as they should deal one with another so would he deal with them; and that should he find them worthy of His mercy and beneficence, in some coming time he would vouchsafe a further revelation of His will towards the children of his love.'

"While Zeydon related this amazing, this overwhelming revelation I grew so tremulous, so confused in mind that I swayed to and fro and would have fallen to the floor had he not caught me in his arms; which so added to my agitated state that for a brief space I lost consciousness. And oh, the shame of it! the shame of it! As I regained my senses I felt his kisses on my lips, on my eyes and my face was wet with his tears. Through terror of him I again swooned, which so alarmed him that he summoned assistance. When I again be-

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Tsoina—An Ento Plant which serves as an Altar Offering. It is looked up as sacred.

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came conscious I found myself in my own apartment with attendants ministering to me, and the anxious countenance of our kind physician, Ammen Eldạ, bending over me. To his questioning as to what had induced the seizure I could make no reply, and as he persisted in his inquiries I fell into such a fit of uncontrollable weeping that he refrained and sought for means to control my agitation, which seemed to greatly perplex him.

"Before departing for his residence, Zeydon made inquiry as to my condition; and I was made to understand that it was his opinion that "silence and solitude" would soon restore me to my usual state of tranquility and health.

"Ah, little does Zeydon, or any one but thee, my Invạloû, know of the tempest of angry rebellion that ever rages in my heart against him who is the cause of our cruel separation from our dear parents and our home, where we were as free and joyous as soaring *Fliksḥạs singing their morning song to the rising radiance of Andûmanạ's glorious abode. And Invạloû, my Invạloû, I am so filled with apprehension and with a dread of I know not what that the knowledge of Andûmanạ's won-

*A beautiful gray and yellow singing bird.

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drous revelation to his children falls almost without meaning upon my senses."

During Fronạ's impetuous relation of her astounding experience Invạloû seemed to have grown into the rigidity of a statue. Only that his breath came in short, labored gasps and that in his darks eyes was an expression of horror and amazement, one might have thought him bereft of life. From his close set lips came not one word to break his silence, which so alarmed the trembling Fronạ, that in great trepidation she clung to him, calling tenderly, tearfully, "Invạloû, Invạloû."

Beyond a slight movement and a quivering sigh that was as a moan of some wounded creature, he made no response.

"Invạloû! My dearest, speak to me, oh speak to me!"

Fronạ's entreating voice shocked him into partial consciousness. A rush of color dyed the rich olive of his face and then, arousing as from a stupor, his eyes rested tenderly upon the lovely golden head of her whose existence was so closely interwoven with his own. Then he drew her white arms upward about his neck and in a broken voice murmured: "My dear love, my poor love, it were better far that the flames of the sacrificial altar should

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burn thy fair body to ashes than that the flame of Zeydon's unholy passion shall consume thy life and mine. Fronạ, Fronạ, how shall I save thee from this treacherous priest who tore us from our dear home, from our beloved and loving parents, from all that made existence desirable, that thus he might have thee at his mercy?

"That I was made to share thy misfortune, was not that he cared aught for my welfare, but he dared not accuse thy parents of a lack of religious observance, and proper care for thee without accusing mine of a like violation of the commandments of the sacred writings. Now the mystery of his conduct, which ever has perplexed me, is solved, and, though I die for it, he shall atone for the wrong he has done thee and me.

"Fronạ, my dearest, thou hast risked much in coming to me to-day and every moment increases the hazard of a discovery of our meeting, which must not soon again occur lest harm may come to thee and me. Here in this cleft of our rocky trysting place leave written word of any evil that may threaten thee, and I swear by the just gods that should Zeydon further pursue thee I will send him into the

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Silence, even though we both may follow him."

For a moment her white scared face rested on his breast, and lips met lips tremulous with contending emotions; then there were tender, lingering adieus, and Fronạ stole noiselessly away through the shrubbery, a lovely white robed vision with golden hair, shaming the sheen of the gold, a gemmed fillet confining it away from her brow from whence it fell in shining waves, framing a face as beautiful as the face of a goddess and veiling a form of surpassing perfection.

Motionless as the rock against which he leaned, but with face aflame and eyes full of tenderness and unshed tears, Invạloû gazed upon her retreating form until the last faint glimpse of her white robe vanished; then, with drooping head and drawn brow, he stood thinking; and as memory revived the sorrowful events of recent years the lines in his youthful face deepened into an expression of helpless, hopeless anguish, and his form was shaken by a tearless sobbing, pitiful beyond description. After a time this grievous paroxysm ceased, and into the depths of his dark eyes came a glow, as of hidden fire, irradiating his now upturned face, which in a

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few passing moments had grown so strangely mature and so startling in its intensity of expression that Invạloû Nyassạ, the youth, stood revealed as Invạloû Nyassạ, one of the handsomest and most noticeable men of the stately Wend race.

Upward, upward from the invisible realm of the Supreme One, Diạfon ēvoihạ, had risen; and now it neared high noon, when Andûmanạ would look downward from His glowing abode upon the homes of his children, from whence many were hastening towards his temples to offer to him their reverent adoration, and to the Deific Ones, his messengers, their supplications for forgiveness of transgressions or for protection from danger and the dread summoner, Death.

Presently the air became vibrant with the melody of temple bells, and the rapt expression of Invạloû's face grew into one of intense entreaty as with upreaching hands he reverently prayed: "Oh thou Supreme, Self-existing One, in whom there is neither beginning or ending of time: thou lookest backward and forward and knowest all things. Thou who art all wisdom and all power and who createst and destroyest as it pleaseth thee; thou who knowest thy children, who

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know thee only as thou revealest thyself to them; thou loving, just and merciful one to whom thy messengers bear records of the good and evil deeds of thy children, I, Invaḷoû Nyassaṇ, implore thee that thou mayest permit thy messenger to bear to thee a plea for mercy for two of thy sorrowful children who desire to serve thee according to thy expressed commandments, and who fear thy righteous anger should we take upon ourselves vows for which a mutual love which has existed through all the years of our young lives unfits us. Pity us! Oh, pity and save us from an unwilling desecration of thy laws and of the ceremonials of thy holy temple! If my plea shall meet with thy disfavor then are we lost to all hope of rescue, and naught but the silence of death can save us from a darker doom.

"To thee, thou messenger divine, I commend this prayer to Andûmaṇa. Plead for us, that if we may not escape from taking upon ourselves obligations which we dare not assume, that once, ere we shall go into the Silence, we may behold the dear faces of our beloved parents, who, if they yet exist, are full of sorrow and loneliness. I have naught to offer thee; but for thy loving service I entreat

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thee to accept the adoring gratitude of my breaking heart."

For a little he stood as though listening for a response to his prayer; then, with a heavy sigh, he took up the book which had fallen from his hands and went hastily towards the *Litzen Rinạdạ, to assist at the noonday service.

*Institution for the training of priests and priestesses.

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CHAPTER VI.

Summer was merging into autumn and the red and gold of the *Indalûfas and Asmonas glowed amid the yet unchanged greenery of other shrubs like masses of ruddy or golden flames.

Aloft, amid the great crests of the towering Bûdas trees, birds of varied plumage and song flitted to and fro, enlivening with harsh or sweeter notes the solitude surrounding Amatû, a not very extensive but beautifully picturesque estate situated at no great distance from Koidassa, the estate of the Nyassas.

The lands of Amatû were low lying, and near their centre was, and indeed yet is, a spacious and substantial edifice of gray stone of a style of architecture partaking of both the antique and the modern, whose massive, time-defying walls were pierced by numerous windows, many of which were draped with a wealth of climbing, flowering vines, whose rootlets, finding foothold on walls and towers, distributed their luxuriant leafage in graceful

†Shrubs of large growth and fine foliage with insignificant blooms, yet very fragrant.

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wreaths and coronets of verdure and bloom.

The interior of the residence was in strong contrast with its severely plain exterior. From entrance to exit its halls and apartments were extremely ornate and exquisitely beautiful. All that wealth and refined taste could suggest found expression in its priceless art treasures and sumptuous furnishings; but in neither halls nor apartments was a sound of voice or of footfall.

Nearby this residence were the homes of the families who cultivated the lands of the estate and, when necessary, performed such domestic duties as the proprietor of Amatû desired.

Towards the close of a warm, languorous day whose hazy breath overspread as with a silvery veil the uplands lying about Amatû,—a day of a season which ever begets melancholy and tender memories of joys or sorrows gone never to return; memories through which one recalls faces and forms of beloved and lost ones; memories in which linger voices like strains of dying music; voices which, alas, will be heard nevermore.

On such a day as this, when the slanting, golden beams of Andûmana's abode were piercing dusky recesses and darkened nooks

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and tinging with a radiant glory the Towers of Amạtû and the green sward of the broad valley across the lengthening shadows of the lofty Bûdạs trees, noiselessly came one whose presence in this spot and whose appearance anywhere would have excited the admiration and curious interest of even an incurious person.

As he slowly approached the entrance of the residence he glanced about him with the air of one acquainted with his surroundings. Nothing seemed to escape the piercing scrutiny of eyes overshadowed by a grandly imperious brow from which flowed such a wealth of silvery-waved hair that scarcely did his gemmed silver fillet confine its luxuriance. In contrast with his silvery-hued hair, his dark, strikingly handsome face seemed of a deeper tint than others of the Tset-senna, the race of which he was a member and which is known as one of the most powerful races of Ento.

After a brief but critical survey of the grounds and exterior of the residence, this personage ascended the imposing flight of steps leading to the front entrance, when again he paused and looked afar over the broad expanse of the valley and upon the rising slopes of the uplands. As his gaze wandered east-

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ward, into his eyes and face grew an expression of extreme pathos and sadness. Suddenly he turned and, pressed a metallic knob embedded in the massive framework of the great arched doorway. Noiselessly the doors moved into either side of the wall, and as he entered they as noiselessly closed behind him.

Standing in the spacious hallway, he glanced through the gloom into the great apartments on either hand; then his eyes followed the grandly designed staircase, winding upward, until the pattern of the beautiful mosaic of the steps was lost in the hovering twilight of the domed ceiling. Under his breath he whispered, "Never again will her dear feet ascend or my eyes follow with adoring love her matchless form. Never." Then, as though with a certain shrinking reluctance, he turned towards a draped recess in the wall and for a time stood before it with bowed head and folded arms, his tremulous lips moving as though in prayer or in self-communion; but no word or sound disturbed the profound stillness.

After a little he approached the recess, and slowly, hesitatingly drew aside the heavy silken drapery revealing the statuesque loveliness of a superb female form bearing in her

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shapely arms a mass of Rodel blooms and wearing on her beautifully curved lips a smile of adorable sweetness. Before this white vision of beauty the man sank to his knees with a moan so pitiful that it seemed to echo and re-echo through the lonely apartments and then to die away as dies the expiring breath of one going into the dread silence of death.

Diąfon ēvoihą descended into the realm of the Supreme One, and only its radiant afterglow decked with crimson and gold the drapery of the portals of Astranolą. Yet silent and motionless the man remained. About him fell the shadows of departing day, and twilight deepened into darkness. Still he neither moved nor uttered a sound.

Now a marvelous thing occurred, of which this man, Oûman Mitsą, left a carefully written record. On the death-like stillness about him fell soft, faint notes as of music from afar. Now they smote the air about him: anon they floated away and ceased, only to return again with such distinctness that the atmosphere seemed vibrant with melodious sound. Then a strange, penetrating radiance lighted the recess, revealing the white sculptured form and drapery of the beautiful statue, which to

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his excited imagination appeared wondrously lifelike.

Into his face grew an expression of ecstatic adoration, and, as his tearful eyes gazed upon the illumined image of his dead wife, in broken accents he cried: "O merciful, O pitiful gods, I am as one bereft of judgment! In yonder lifeless image of my lost Zoûlēne I again seem to behold her loving smile; nay, more, to again hear the very tones of her gentle voice murmuring, 'My beloved, my beloved.' Ah, this is madness! The dead live not again; and it is that ye commiserate my loneliness and unceasing longing for my adored, dead companion that ye accord to me this wondrous marvel of recalling, if but for a brief moment, a semblance of the woman who was my wife, my beautiful, my ever lamented Zoûlēne!"

Ere he ceased his broken utterances the radiance died away, leaving the low prostrate man in complete darkness and silence. After a considerable lapse of time he gradually aroused from the lethargic state into which he had fallen, and, rising to his feet, he touched an electric appliance which instantly flooded the great halls and apartments with brilliant light. Sinking upon a couch he mused upon

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the strange scene which he had just witnessed, and which, I may say, was but one of several similar experiences which during ensuing years came to him.

As he mused, into his thoughts came unbidden questions, so persistent, so contrary to the teachings of our holy religion, that at last in utter bewilderment he prayed, "O ye Deific Ones, who have shown such a wondrous expression of your love for me, who am so unworthy; I beseech you to bear to Andûmaṇa, the Supreme One, my earnest entreaty that my understanding may so increase that I may be able to comprehend questions ever persistently coming from I know not where and tormenting me with ceaseless unrest. It is not for me, who am woefully ignorant, to question thee as to the hidden meanings of thy will; but in deepest humility I pray that through thy compassionate love thy children may be made to see with clearer eyes, and with finer comprehension to understand the meaning of the existence thou has bestowed upon us. As I near the Silence I shrink back in terror from the thought that all that I am must be resolved into nothingness! I would not be irreverent, O Thou Almighty, thou Supreme One, but ever am I dreaming of a time

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when through thy love for thy children thou mayst create them immortal. Though my lost Zoûlēne and I shall never know the glory of perpetual existence, that it may sometime be vouchsafed to those thou mayst yet create, is the fervent prayer of thy unhappy son, who, if it might please thee, gladly would pass through the sacrificial flames, if thus so great a good might come to thy children of Ento!"

Unable to longer endure the trend of thought into which his recent experience had led him, he hastily arose from the couch, and with slow hesitating steps passed from room to room, his shrinking glances encountering on every hand well remembered objects, which somehow seemed to have acquired the unfamiliarity of faces not seen for years. His sensations were those of one in a half waking state, where the real and the unreal were strangely commingled. He was not able to at once realize that, during the four years that had elapsed since he had fled distractedly from scenes he could no longer endure, for him alone the faces of all familiar things had changed: this was a truth that he comprehended later.

Four years ago his hair was as dusky as the

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plumage of the harsh voiced *Raûccą. Now, as he moved opposite a portrait of himself, painted a short time previous to the death of his wife, he started with an exclammation of extreme surprise and consternation; and, as he stared at it in confusion and perplexity, he passed his hands over his face and hair, murmuring, "Am I so changed, so changed? Alas, it is I, and not these inanimate objects, which doubtless are as I left them, that have changed!"

Long he gazed at the portrait; then with a heavy sigh he passed on until he traversed the entire lower floor and stood irresolutely at the foot of the staircase, which, after a little, he ascended to the spacious landing, where for a moment he stood looking about him with the same shrinking glances that characterized his manner while surveying the lower floor. Then he wandered from one apartment to another until he approached a closed door at the front of the residence, where he tremblingly paused and seemed inclined to turn away. As though urged by a sudden impulse, he almost impetuously unclosed the door and entered the

*A large, black bird.

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brightly illumined, daintily furnished apartments of his dead Zoûlēne.

With closely clasped hands he stood for a time within the threshhold of the open door, his breath coming and going in deep quivering sighs, his thoughts in a mad tumult of conflicting emotions. Four years had elapsed since he had stood within this room, which was hallowed by association with the beautiful, the adorable woman whose love had made his life so full of contentment that he would not have exchanged it for the blissful existence of the Deific Ones.

Zoûlēne had come to him when he was nearing the noon of his days, when well earned honors and wealth had placed him among the foremost of Ento's distinguished sons. What Diafon ēvoiņa is to Ento, Zoûlēne had been to him; for with the warmth and effulgence of her immeasurable love she had made his life radiant with joy. In return, no day was long enough in which to adore her; no night was welcome, for in sleep they were as though they were not. When days had dawned he had looked into her face and found there the fruition of all his desires; when noon arrived, the radiance of Diąfon ēvoihą was reflected in the glory of her empurpled eyes, and all she look-

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ed upon was made divine; when darkness drew its veil across the face of night, she had rested in his sheltering arms, enkindling in his heart a flame so worshipful, so deathless, that when she was called into the Silence he was for a time bereft of sense and consciousness; and when finally he realized that he yet lived, the urned ashes of his wife and their still-born child were all that remained of the light and joy of his life.

Like an inflowing wave these bitter sweet memories swept over his senses, and with bowed head and closed eyes he stood panting like an exhausted swimmer. This paroxysm of emotion passed; and when he regained a degree of composure he turned, softly closed the door, and went towards a beautiful cabinet, which he opened with trembling hands. As he gazed upon its contents, he sorrowfully recalled memories hallowed by loving words, a kiss, or a fond caress. "In this casket," he mused, "are the gems she wore on our marriage day, and their pearly whiteness is not purer than was her fair face when it rested on my breast. In these blood red stones again I see the carmine of her lips, which were as lovely as the half-blown carmine buds of the

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queenly *Flûʃna; and in her wondrously beautiful eyes was the luminous, purplish blue of these ‡Rûʃtzas, which it pleased me to see her wear on neck and arms, where they gleamed like bits of Astranola's sacred walls."

Into these unhappy memories suddenly, strangely dissimilar thoughts intruded themselves, so suddenly and vividly indeed that he started and looked about him with an inquiring air, as though some one had spoken to him. "Ah! How fanciful I have grown," he said. "My ever-present sorrow renders me so susceptible to the distress of others that, as note responds to kindred note, so responds my heavy thoughts to those of dear friends whose lives, like my own, are blighted until the ending of their days."

Lifting the Ruʃtzas from their silken receptacle, he turned them this way and that, their glowing hearts gleaming like imprisoned fire. As he watched their changing tones of purplish blue, he murmured: "The color of her lovely eyes; yes, they are the color of Zoûlēne's eyes and of Frona's, the daughter

*Resembles the rose; colors: white, pink and crimson.

‡Sapphires.

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of her kinswoman, Avạnnạ Nyassạ. As I this day looked into Avạnnạ's haggard face and listened to a story that chilled my blood I thanked the gods that our child had been called with thee Zoûlēne into the Silence. So incensed was I by Avạnnạ's recital that I entreated the just gods to implore Andûmanạ to cause the high priest to undo the wrong he has committed, or to avenge the immeasurable wretchedness of the parents who only exist in the hope of once more seeing the faces of their adored children. By thy sacred memory and that of our child, my dead Zoûlēne, I have vowed to do my utmost to unravel what I deem a wrong and a mystery. May the Deific Ones aid me in my endeavor!"

As these thoughts surged through Oûman Mitsạ's mind and fell unconsciously in broken sentences from his lips, he closed the cabinet and moved about with a certain timid hesitancy, as though he felt that he was intruding upon the sacred privacy of some holy one.

Now his faltering steps approached the entrance to the adjoining room, the sleeping apartment of her who only lived to smile upon the face of their newly born babe and into the eyes of the adoring husband and father. How vividly all came back to him!

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Suddenly she had paled into the whiteness of the snowy pillow supporting her golden-haired head, and into her wide open eyes came an expression of awful fear. A moment later Zoûlēne was embraced by the Silence. With terror stricken cries he took her into his strong loving arms, imploring her to breathe, to speak. But neither breath nor speech came for all his wild imploring; but on the sweet lips a smile was dawning, the strange, mysterious smile of death. In a mad frenzy he cried to the dread God of the Silence to take him and spare Zoûlēne and the child: for reply, the beloved forms grew cold and rigid in the embrace of the implacable destroyer who spares neither youth nor age, nor breaking hearts.

As his shrinking glances wandered over the great silent apartment, he remembered how the terror, the horror, the agony of it all like an overwhelming flood had rushed upon his senses; and how, reeling like one intoxicated, he had reached out his arms, staggered towards her couch, and fell on his knees with his face on her pillow, where with sobbing cries he wept such tears of anguish as must have moved the pity of the gods who in their mercy overpowered his senses with sleep.

The night wore on, and in the gray of dawn

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he moved uneasily. A moaning sigh broke the stillness of the room, startling him into partial consciousness. Raising his head, he brushed away from his face a mass of snowy hair and stared about him with a dazed questioning in his dark sombrous eyes. Suddenly a realization of the situation rushed upon his awakened senses. Wearily he arose, smoothed the disordered pillow, stooped and kissed it, and, going to a window, drew aside the heavy drapery and opened the casement, letting in the cool, moist morning air and the golden radiance of Andûmaṇa's rising abode, which already had set the clouds aflame with the glory of its life giving beams.

Motionless, he stood gazing upon the changing tints of the slowly drifting clouds veiling the habitations of the Deific Ones, upon the waving crests of the lofty Bûdạs trees, whose rustling seemed to fill the air with whisperings of some unseen mystery; upon the tranquil beauty of the vale through which flowed a sparkling stream fringed with shrubbery and a glow of autumn blooms; upon a white marble group which Zoûlēne and he, in their early wedded days, had designed, and from whose upreaching hands a silvery jet of water was falling in mist-like spray into

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a great basin, over whose white rim a wealth of foliage and flowers trailed and drooped to the surface of the water, which was stirred into ripples by the flashing forms of red and golden *Steffas.

As his heavy eyes wandered aimlessly from object to object, he was conscious that the air was vocal with the music of birds, whose grave or gay plumage was flashing amid the leafage of the Bûḍạs trees and undergrowing shrubbery or were darting downward to sip the water of the fountain. With a heavy sigh he remembered—ah! yes, he remembered—how in the dawns of bygone days Zoûlēne and he had stood by this window to watch the awakening of the beautiful world in which their creator had placed them and how, as the beams of his shining abode rose above the uplands, they had prayed that together they might share the joys of many days ere he should permit Death to call them back into the Silence. And then—and then . . . Not daring to further pursue this train of thought, he closed the window, and, perceiving that the house was still illumined, he extinguished the lights, and walked slowly towards the

*Fish.

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further room of the suite where was an exquisitely beautiful altar whereat Zoûlēne and he had offered their devotions to Andûmaṇa and the Deific Ones, and whereon they had laid the beautiful symbolic, red and golden blooms of the *Tsoniạ and †Valsētạ. Ere forsaking his desolated home he had given instructions that Zoûlēne's apartments should, until his return, remain undisturbed: so there on the altar were the faded, crumbling blooms that he and she had offered on the morning of the day which had brought birth, death and unspeakable sorrow into his life.

Gathering up the unsightly, scentless things, he placed them in the altar urn, and for some moments stood as though he would offer a prayer; but in these moments a strange mood took possession of him and under his breath he muttered rebelliously: What shall I pray for? Not for Zoûlēne and our child: they are but a pitiful memory. Not for myself, for erelong I shall be as they are, a handful of ashes—naught but a handful of ashes. Shall I pray for pardon for the madly rebellious thoughts which set my brain aflame and fill my

*Red, lily-shaped blooms.

†Small, yellow blooms.

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heart with bitterness and intolerable anguish? What matters it whether I implore or adore Andûmaṇa and his messengers, whose ways are the ways of gods and whose will no prayer of mine may swerve to the right or to the left.

"I am but one of myriads of created things, created for what purpose I know not. Were I infinite I would not create, only that I might destroy. No! Through the infinity of my love and power I would create only that which would reflect the glory of my measureless love and which should be as immortal as myself. Alas! I am very finite, and I do not in the least comprehend the strange, unfathomable mystery of existence. I am as an imprisoned creature ever struggling for freedom, and the bonds which hold me fast lacerate and cut into the fibers of my very being. But I cannot escape; save in one way, I cannot escape. Andûmaṇa, thou Supreme One, I am as nothing in thy hands; but through the anguish of my tortured mind, which thou hast given me, I dare to question thee. Why dost thou not give to thy children the one boon worthy of Thy Infinity: the boon of an existence as deathless as thine own?"

Assuredly, only one of a desperately unbalanced mind would have uttered such impious

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words; but in Oûman Mitsû's grievous sorrow one finds some excuse, or at least an explanation of his distraught emotions; and doubtless it was thus that the Deific Ones regarded his strangely confused thoughts and utterances, for he was not smitten dead before the altar, or in any manner punished for his irreverent expressions which we know were extremely censurable.

It would seem that he anticipated some sort of retributive punishment, for after this amazing outburst, in reverent and submissive tones, he prayed: "Thou who knowest all things knowest my thoughts. Do with me as it may please thee, for whether I may yet a while live or instantly may go into the Silence, I care not. I am Thy child out of Thyself: Thou hast created me. I am life of Thy life, and sometimes in my mind there is a thought that at death I may return to Thee, Who will not destroy a part of Thyself. If I sin in questioning the accepted interpretations of Thy holy writings, I pray Thee be patient with me, who desire to be righteous in all my thoughts and deeds. Thou knowest that in these later days many of the high priests serving in Thy temples have grown arrogant and exacting to an oppressive degree; and I offer

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Thee my grateful praise that in the latest revelation of Thy love Thou hast rebuked those whose misguided zeal and unrighteous self-seeking incited in them a desire to render Thy children entirely subservient to their perverted will, even needlessly depriving parents of their dearest possession, the children Thou didst give into their keeping. For this inexpressibly beneficent revelation of Thy will, I, one of the humblest of Thy children, adore Thee, and offer for Thy service all that I have and am. I entreat Thee, O Thou Mighty One, that Thou mayst so direct my ways that the remaining days of my life may be devoted to righting the wrongs of those who are oppressed and assisting the weakness of those unable to sustain themselves; for thus, in serving Thy children, I shall serve Thee."

Then, with lowly bowed head, he fervently murmured: "Rạû, Rạû, Rạû," and turning from the altar passed from the room and to the lower floor to summon the keeper and attendants, who in amazement and some trepidation hastened to welcome and to receive instructions from the long absent and beloved Oûman Mitsạ.

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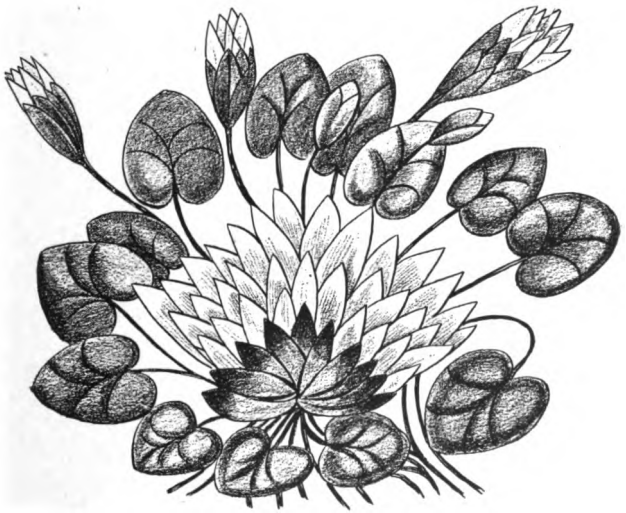
CHAPTER VII.

In the Litzen Rinadą, known as Moûtsen ken ąvą special preparations were in progress for the approaching consecration of ten youths and as many maidens, who soon would take upon themselves such vows as would set them apart from the vanities, interests and allurements of ordinary existence.

I scarcely need say that in all Litzen Rinądąs, during the years of preparation for the temple service, the training of novices is of a nature calculated to subdue all emotions of a disturbing character; and that this feature of their training may be constantly and thoroughly tested, these youths and maidens are brought into daily association: which certainly is a wise regulation; for, as all are aware, the temple service requires the dual ministrations of priests and priestesses, whose lives must be wholly dedicated to the observances of our holy religion and a practice of all the virtues.

I make mention of this feature of Litzen Rinądą training, for the reason that there are those who consider it unwise to subject untried youth to temptation; but, from such observation as I have made, I conclude that the

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Rodel—the National Flower of Mars, Emblematic of Life and Death.

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strength of maturity is won chiefly through overcoming the temptations of youth. Hence, I find no fault with a system which for many centuries has found favor with those best fitted to form correct judgment.

As the day of consecration drew near, there were among the novices some whose hearts were filled with anguish; for, now that the sacrificial rite no longer endangered their lives, gladly would they have returned to love and freedom. But having chosen their vocation, or having had it chosen for them, only through a decision of the most high priest could they escape from it. But, as I am chiefly concerned in writing the pitiful story of Invaloû and Fronạ, I must refrain from writing of the sorrows of others.

Only once since the meeting of which I have already written had Fronạ ventured to, for a few moments, meet Invaloû in their trysting place: but in a secret cleft of the rock their letters had found a safe repository. Thus, they had been mutually informed of daily occurrences, especially of Zeydon's conduct towards Fronạ, which, while outwardly circumspect, was of a nature to fill the mind of the timid, sensitive girl with constant apprehen-

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sion and terror, and Invaloû with a deadly rage.

As a preliminary to their consecration to the temple service, each novice was, as they yet are, subjected by the high priest to a private, individual examination as to their proficiency and fitness for the sacred functions of priests and priestesses. The ten youths and nine of the maidens, having successfully passed through the ordeal, but one remained; and, in a moment, she, poor trembling Frona, found herself in the presence of a menace she but dimly comprehended, but which she recognized and shrank from as from something that was enmeshing her in the treacherous folds of an intangible web, against which her struggles availed naught.

To assert that the high priest Zeydon was a deliberately wicked man, and faithless priest, would be a misstatement: for up to the time when Frona's wonderful beauty and that nameless something, which irresistibly attracts to some men and women the devotion of all who come within their influence had enthralled him, he was utterly emotionless; and, even when the spell of her lovely budding womanhood had stolen unawares upon his senses, he was as one too intoxicated to perceive that

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his feet were approaching a precipice from which ere long it would be too late for him to recede.

Strange as it may appear, his infatuation for the hapless girl so blinded him to the true nature of his emotions that he began to invest her with the attributes of a goddess, and as one too pure for the ordinary uses of life, from which in some way she must be set apart. But one way was open to the self deceived, misguided man; and, impelled by a resistless passion, he resorted to the unquestionable power of his holy office to compass his purpose.

Although, as high priest, Zeydon well knew that from his decision there could be no appeal, his unquiet conscience made him cowardly; and, while seeking for a pretext for the removal of Fronạ, he perceived that, in order to appear consistent, he must also remove Invạlọû, who was subject to the same supposedly pernicious guardianship of too indulgent parents. This decision arrived at, he soon found opportunity for consummating his reprehensible design: and now standing before him was one of his victims, Fronạ Nyassạ.

To adequately describe the ensuing scene is quite beyond my poor ability. So, for even my best endeavor, I must ask your kindest indul-

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gence—you who perchance may read this story of a bygone time.

Near the centre of the audience room was a richly ornate *Plitsą, on which Zeydon half reclined: the crimson and gold of his robes contrasting finely with the tint of his dark complexion and the waving luxuriance of his flowing, dusky hair, held away from his handsome face by the gemmed golden fillet of his priestly order. In his large, dark, luminous eyes was an expression denoting a very war of conflicting emotions, as Froną, with drooping head and face as pallid as Roiną blooms, stood in trembling terror before him.

Suddenly, through the violence of his emotions, a deathly faintness seized him, and he felt that he was drifting into unconsciousness, —perhaps into the embrace of death. Greatly terrified, he staggered to his feet, leaning upon a nearby table for support.

His apparently sudden illness so alarmed Froną that she cried aloud for assistance, which speedily brought Zeydon to his senses, but not soon enough to prevent one who waited in the adjoining apartment for an audience with him, from rushing into the room and to

*A sort of divan.

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his side. With much solicitude of manner, this person exclaimed, "Ah, your Sacredness is ill! What can I do for you? Shall I call for assistance?"

The embarrassment of the situation quickly aroused Zeydon's sense of self-protection, and with a smile, he murmured: "No! I shall in a moment be quite recovered. The duties of the day have somewhat exhausted my strength. Fronạ, my child, I shall until to-morrow defer your examination: so you may retire."

Glad if but for one day's respite from an ordeal which she regarded with inexpressible dread, the girl, with a low obeisance to the high priest, turned to leave the audience room. But in that moment she raised her eyes, to encounter the startled gaze of Oûman Mitsạ, whom she instantly recognized as her kinsman, by whom, as a child, she had been petted and made much of.

The recognition was mutual, and as Oûman Mitsạ impetuously exclaimed, "Fronạ, Fronạ, thou image of my dead wife!" the poor girl threw herself at his feet, crying in accents that might have moved the sternest nature: "Tell me, oh tell me, dear kinsman, do my beloved parents yet live? Do the parents of my cousin Invạloû yet live?" Without waiting

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for a reply, she frantically cried: "Pity us, oh pity us, dear kinsman, and save us from taking upon ourselves vows against which we revolt, and from desecrating the sacred office of the priesthood, for which we are not fitted. Entreat, I pray you, this our high priest to release us from assuming obligations which to us are more repellant than the silence of death!"

With tears raining down her white face she clung to his knees, uttering such piteous, such heart-rending entreaties that Oûman Mitsą raised her to her feet; and, despite the high priest's protestations, he said: "My poor *Zymas, my poor wounded Zymas! Yes! Yours and Invąloû's parents live and love you both more than my poor tongue can express. But they only live in the hope of sometime seeing your faces. May the just and merciful gods so order their and your days that, before going into the Silence, your mutual prayers may find answer in the fulfillment of natural and righteous desires!"

Turning to the enraged and discomfited high priest, with an air of apology and reverence, he said: "Your Sacredness will, I doubt

*A cooing, gray bird.

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not, be pleased to overlook this outburst of surprised recognition on the part of my young kinswoman and myself. Your Sacredness is aware that my dead wife Zoûlēne was Avạnnạ Nyassạ's cousin; and I may say that as a child Fronạ was as much at home at Amạtû as at Koidassạ. As our only child passed with its mother into the Silence, I have come to you to-day to inform you that it is my wish and intention that Fronạ shall be the inheritress of all my possession: an act which, I feel assured, will meet with Your Sacredness's warm approval."

"As this is a matter for the private consideration of his Sacredness and myself I will no longer detain you, Fronạ," he said to the trembling creature who clung to his hands as though he were her only refuge—as indeed he was. Gently disengaging her clinging grasp with a reassuring pressure of her cold tremulous hands, and a glance of his kindly smiling eyes, she, with a profound obeisance to the high priest, left the room and the two men, who instinctively regarded each other with deadly animosity.

In Zeydon's flashing eyes was an expression of such intense anger and outraged dignity that, had Oûman Mitsạ been an ordinary man,

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he would have quailed before this incarnation of priestly power and arrogant pride of office. But Oûman Mitsą was not one to quail before gods or men. With a rarely reverent nature for all that was truly sacred, righteous and just, was an innate abhorrence for all that was contrary to the teachings of our holy religion. And as he unflinchingly looked into the High Priest's eyes, he read there the story of one who, through either weakness or wickedness, had fallen from the heights of purity to the depths of selfish desires, which, like fierce flames, were consuming the best traits of a once fine nature.

All this in a moment passed through Oûman Mitsą's mind; and, like one bracing himself to meet the impact of some tremendous force, he drew himself to the full height of his majestic stature, and, with a suave smile and deferential manner, asked, "Have I Your Sacredness' permission to speak?"

The high priest inclined his head, but spoke no word. Neither did he raise his eyes towards Oûman Mitsą, who, in a very composed manner proceeded to say: "Your Sacredness, I would speak of a matter which, to you, must be of slight importance, but which is, naturally, to me, quite the reverse.

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"As you are aware, I am possessed of considerable wealth. Prompted by both affection and a sense of duty, I desire to devise it to one whom I regard as being more fully entitled to it than are any others of my kindred.

"Not being blest with close relatives of my own, naturally I turn to those of my dear, dead wife, who, though gone into the Silence, ever exists for me; and I cherish a remembrance of her expressed wishes concerning all that was dear to her. As you perceive, I have passed the noonday of life and am approaching the borderland of the Silence. The dread darkness into which, inevitably, we all must go, and my imperative duty, as well as my inclination, urge me to so arrange my affairs that after I shall have gone no one my find occasion to question either my sense of justice or my sanity.

"It may seem that this is a matter which should not have been so long deferred, and I regret that I have allowed myself to become so immersed in affairs of government as to have lost sight of duties lying nearer my heart. Now that I desire to make speedy reparation for my negligence, I have come to Your Sacredness, to request you to entreat the Deific Ones to release Invaloû and Frona from in-

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curring obligations for which it is evident they have no inclination. That my plea may meet with their favorable consideration, I will decote as an offering to the temple which is honored by the services of Your Sacredness one third, or even one half, of my large possessions.

"Your Sacredness, I do not appeal to your sense of justice; for, being a high priest of our holy religion, your motives are not to be questioned; but I do entreat that you may be merciful to the sorrowing parents of Ịnvạloû and Froṇạ, who have authorized me to say to Your Sacredness, that for the release of their children they will gladly yield all that they possess; that if they were remiss in their duties towards our holy religion, or towards their children, thir remissness was wholly unintentional; and they beg that their years of bitter sorrow may have atoned for the inconsiderate conduct. To offer further entreaty, would be to reflect upon Your Sacredness's loving care for those whom Andûmaṇạ has confided to your guidance and protection.

"I beg to offer my thanks for your patient hearing of my plea, which you alone can further or render futile. And may Andûmaṇạ, who sees and knows all that concerns his

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children, reward us for righteous conduct, and avenge himself upon us when we do unrighteous deeds!'

With such gravity and intensity were these closing words uttered, that for a moment Zeydon felt himself trembling in every limb. But he quickly recovered himself, and, rising slowly to his feet, he regarded his suppliant with a look of such resentful scorn that, inwardly, Oûman Mitsạ recoiled from it; but instantly, with head erect and defiant eyes, he confronted the high priest as might an avenging god, and, in that moment, both men realized that they were foemen and that the weakest would perish in the fight.

Summoning to his aid all his subtlest forces, with the shadow of a contemptuous smile upon his lips, Zeydon said: "You have come to me upon a strange, an unwarrantable errand. Who are you that you dare to interfere with the decrees of the mighty Gods! In removing Invạloû and Froṇạ from the harmful influences to which they were subjected, I but obeyed the commands of one of Andûmaṇạ's Messengers; and it would be more seemly were you to remember that obedience and humility are greater virtues than presumption

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and irreverence, which ever bring in their train degradation and disaster.

"It is not for me to act contrary to the will of the Divine Ones: and I refuse to permit the selfish views of wrong-minded persons to interfere with what alone concerns the interests of our holy religion, which by divine right takes precedence of all other interests! You have my answer and your dismissal," he said coldly, then turned to leave the audience room.

In the mind of Oûman Mitsą there was a momentary indecision. Then in a voice tremulous with suppressed emotions he exclaimed: "Hearken to me, Zeydon, thou high priest of a religion that is holier than thee! Hearken to me! I am not one who is irreverent in aught concerning our holy religion; neither am I one who, under the guise of a friendly face, am in my heart a secret foe. And I tell thee, Zeydon-ą-Gamąlą, that I distrust thee and thy motives, and I vow that by the aid of the just gods that I will do my utmost to undo the wrong that thou hast done my friends and the kinsmen and kinswomen of my dead wife, Zoûlēnē!"

"While he spoke, Zeydon turned about as though he would curse his daring and irreverent accuser. But with an imperious wave

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of his hand Oûman Mitsạ restrained him, and, in a voice of concentrated anger and contempt, he advanced a step towards the enraged priest, saying in measured tones: "I do not fear thee, thou arrogant and cruel one: so spare thyself this expression of thy evil nature. Through Andûmaṇa's love and pity for his children, no longer is the sacrificial Rite demanded: so do thy worst. But remember that I shall hold thee accountable to me! To me! Dost thou hear? To me!"

Leaving Zeydon speechless through indignation, rage and dismay, Oûman Mitsạ without ceremony left the audience room and Litzen Riṇaḍạ, but not before Froṇạ found opportunity to slip into his hand some lines addressed to him and to her parents.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Good morning, Gentolą: To your fervent prayer for guidance we respond with an earnest Amen!

Ere continuing the narration of the story, I desire to say that you who already have learned much concerning my people, the Entoans, will understand that, to those unacquainted with our laws and customs of both a secular and a sacred nature, portions of it may appear obscure. That I may render it more intelligible to those who may care to read that which concerns people of another Planet, I shall allude to certain features of the period during which the events of the story occurred; also, to certain usages which then, and, until the recent consummation of our mission, held the peoples of Ento in absolute bondage.

You, Gentolą, are aware that for more than four Ento centuries I have been in our spirit world, and that the events of this veracious story occurred long antecedent to my birth. At the time of my death I was yet in my early youth; and but once during my mortal existence was human sacrifice offered: and

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that was voluntary on the part of a maiden who devoted herself as an expiatory sacrifice, hoping thereby to appease the wrath of Andûmaṇa, who, for some unknown transgression of his wayward children, afflicted them with a disease so fatal as to threaten their entire extinction. You may recall that during our Mission I had occasion to allude to the pitiful affair which occurred during my brother's, Inidoṛa's, and my childhood, which left upon our immature minds a most distressing impression.

Decimon Hûŷdas, the writer of the little story which I am attempting to relate, has stated, that when through Andûmaṇa's pitying love the peoples found themselves freed from the ever-present dread of having their dearest ones chosen as victims of the Sacrificial Rite, for which always the fairest youths and maidens were selected, their exultation exceeded all reasonable bounds, impelling them not only to a nonobservance of the commandments of the sacred writings, but, also, to a lessened reverence for the persons and sacred offices of the Consecrated Ones.

This reprehensible conduct the priesthood could not tolerate, and very soon the people were made to understand that, if they did not

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at once return to a faithful observance of their religious duties, Andûmaṇa would withdraw his manifestation of pitiful love, and again the Sacrificial Rite would be demanded. This announcement speedily brought them to their right minds, and more than ever they became submissive to the requirements of the priesthood, who, possibly unawares, grew more arrogant than formerly in their exaction of ebedience to their ideas of what was due to religion and to themselves. Finally, the people found themselves in a state of absolute subjection to the will of the high priests, who ruled them with the authority of gods.

At the time of my departure into what my religious teachings had led me to regard as perpetual silence, but which, upon entering our Spirit World, I quickly learned was an enlarged life of inexpressible joy and progress. I, like all others, looked upon the priesthood as only a little less to be feared than the Deific Ones of Astranolạ. Thus you will perceive, that when the courageous Oûman Mitsạ braved, not only the anger and power of Zeydon-ạ-Gamạlạ, but, through him, the anger and power of the entire priesthood, he fully understood that he had placed his life in extreme peril, and that only through the inter-

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position of the Deific Ones could he hope to thwart their implacable enmity.

I now will resume the narration of the story.

Genessano Allis Imo.

The night succeeding Oûman Mitsą's interview with the High Priest Zeydon he passed in the home of the Nyassąs, which he reached at the hour when twilight was hushing into stillness the noises of the day. Autumn, with advancing steps and chill breath, was busied with her task of lulling to rest the pulsing activities of nature, and tree, shrub and herbage were laying for her noiseless steps a carpet of many colors.

Amid the feathery crests of the lofty Bûdas trees some belated songsters chirped or trilled their regretful adieus ere flitting to join the comrades in some warmer clime. From somewhere in the distance came, at intervals, the harsh, mournful notes of the ill-omened *Gatsiką; and over the great residence and its surroundings was an air of melancholy and neglect. All this Oûman Mitsą took in at a glance and gave it the tribute of a sigh, then

*A large, gray, red-crested bird.

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made his presence known to his friends, who gave him a welcome as warm as his own greeting.

To fitly describe the scene following his relation of his interview with Zeydon and Froṇạ would demand a brighter mind and a more facile pen than mine. Imagine, if you can, Lûvon and Tillēne, Dammạ and Avạnnạ, a group of trembling auditors weeping and laughing by turns: for, in their almost delirious joy that their children yet lived, they momentarily forgot that they were as dead to them as though they had gone into the Silence.

In their eagerness to learn all that Oûman Mitsạ could tell them of their dearest ones their questions far exceeded his ability to make satisfactory replies. All that concerned Froṇạ's appearance had to be told over and over again. "Does she remember me, her mother?" cried Avạnnạ; and in tremulous tones Dammạ murmured, "I pray she may not have forgotten me, who love her so." With clasped hands and beseeching eyes they breathlessly listened to Oûman Mitsạ's assurance, that she remembered and loved them all; but of her anguish of mind he wisely refrained from speaking. There was immeasurable regret that he had not also seen Invạloû. "But

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he lives, he lives!" sobbed his and Fronạ's parents. "Thanks to Andûmanạ and the merciful gods our children yet live; and may not it be that knowing our sorrow, they may, ere we shall go into the Silence, permit us, if but once, to look upon the dear ones that Andûmanạ did give into our keeping." And Oûman Mistạ fervently prayed: "May it be so, O thou Mighty One in whose hands are all the issues concerning thy helpless children; aid us, we beseech Thee, and may also thy messengers, bear to thee account of our thoughts and deeds; for, alas! we are sorely distressed and have no refuge, save our trust in thy justice, pity and love."

The fervent Rạû's of the suppliants died away like expiring breaths, and for a little no one stirred or spoke. Then Oûman Mitsạ drew from his bosom Fronạ's unread letter,—a letter written by her own dear hand. What sobbing cries, what frantic exclamations of joy and surprise burst from the lips of Lûvon and Tillēne, of Dammạ and Avạnnạ! Why, it was as though the dead had returned from the Silence! Only to see, to touch what Fronạ had touched so overwhelmed her mother that she cried: "Oh, hasten dear Oûman! Hasten to read what our child has written! Hasten,

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for I am near death from joy that she yet lives—my child, my sweet Roiṇa flower, my own, my ———" Her loving words died on her lips, for into Oûman Mitsa's eyes and paling face had come an expression which filled all hearts with terror and dismay: an expression so stern, so vindictive, that his usually benign face seemed transformed. For a space he stared at the letter speechless, and apparently with unseeing gaze, and no one moved or uttered a word. Save for their labored breathing and the terror in their questioning eyes, they were as so many statues.

At length Oûman Mitsa aroused from his state of mental absorption and, with pitying glances at the faces of his friends, he said: "You will bear with me, I know. I would not needlessly alarm you: but I perceive that the poor child's communication unhappily confirms a half formed fear that of late has been torturing me, and the shock of confirmation has somewhat unmanned me. But I will read it, and then we will counsel together. Steadying his voice as best he could, he read poor Froṇa's letter, which ran in this wise:

"My beloved, my adored parents—and only a little less dear relatives: In the moment of such anguish of mind as I dare not attempt

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to express, this, our dear and honored kinsman, Oûman Mitsą, has appeared as though he were a god sent to us from the blest realm of Astranolą. And surely, surely, Andûmaną has chosen him as a messenger between you, my dearest ones, and Invąloû and me, your unhappy children, who long for death that we may escape a crueller fate.

"I have so little space in which to write that I hasten to say that which is of most import. Our consecration to the temple service is near at hand. Invąloû and I shrink from it with dread and horror, for, O My Beloved Ones, we, in our hearts, are as we would be in all ways, wedded to each other.

"We well know that this cannot be, and we strive to be submissive to that which we cannot avert. But, Father, Mother, a great danger threatens me, your helpless Froną; and, knowing that you are as powerless to save me as I am to save myself I shrink from revealing it.

"Zeydon, the high priest (may the just Gods avenge us upon him!) has at last unmasked his false heart; and now Invąloû and I understand why he tore us from our home and from your dear embraces. He is faithless to his sacred vows and would make me a partner of

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his guilt: but be assured that he will fail in his abhorrent desire, for my Invaloû has sworn by the just gods that, even at the expense of Zeydon's life, he will protect my honor,—and he will make his promise good. It is only that I know not what evil thing may occur that I make this known to you, my honored and beloved parents.

"Only to-day have we learned that we are so near our dear home and dearer parents; for when we were removed from Zeydon's residence to this Litzen Rinada we were given a sleeping potion, and, upon our awakening, we were made to believe that we were far distant from Koidassa. Only through our dear kinsman's timely visit to Zeydon has the knowledge come to us; and now I fear that through his commands our accustomed freedom of movement about the grounds may be forbidden. If this should occur I know not how either Invaloû or I may find means to convey to you further knowledge of our condition. I dare write no more, lest I may fail of giving this into our dear kinsman's hand.

"That Andûmana and the pitiful Gods may save and restore us to your arms, is the unceasing prayer of your loving children,

"Invaloû and Frona."

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While, in a voice tremulous with emotion, Oûman Mitsạ read Fronạ's piteous letter, Lûvon and Tillēne, Dammạ and Avạnnạ, with fierce anger raging in their minds and hearts clung to each other in shuddering horror and awful terror.

To have had their children torn from them to be unwillingly thrust into the Temple Service had robbed life of all that made it precious, and now—— now—— Oh, it was maddening to think of the peril threatening their dearest ones! Then came the natural protest of outraged nature, and where a moment ago were four crushed and helpless ones were now four determined avengers of the cruel wrongs perpetrated upon them and their innocent darlings.

As he noted their changed demeanor, on Oûman Mitsạ's strong, handsome face dawned a faint smile, a smile in which there was unusual meaning. "So!" he said. "So, Zeydon, thou base and treacherous priest, we know thee now for what thou art!" Then, with eyes and hands raised towards Astranolạ, he cried: "Ye messengers of Andûmanạ, who bear to him the prayers of his adoring children, hear us, hear and aid us, we implore you: Believing as we do in the justice of our

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cause by the majesty and glory of your and our Creator we swear, that if the High Priest Zeydon dares, save through the duties of his office, to touch one golden hair of Fronạ's head, we will hold him to such strict account that the Silence shall claim one more life to add to the sum of its strange mystery!"

Then in a low, intensely earnest voice, he said "Lûvon, Tillēne, Dammạ, Avạnnạ: It may surprise and displease you to learn that I am done with blind submission to our priestly oppressors, who make of us slaves, rather than reverent worshippers of the one Supreme God and Creator of all things that are. Lately it has grown into my thought as it has grown into the thought of many that they pervert the teachings of the sacred writings and make our holy religion a burthen, rather than a blessing. Does this thought, dear friends, find response in your minds?"

Their exclamations of assent gave reply to his appeal, and he continued. "Ere we shall go into the Silence, at most but a brief space remains to us; and since Invạloû and Fronạ, whose young lives are but well begun, death is preferable to dishonor, shall we, who love them more than all else, hesitate to offer on

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their behalf all that we possess,—aye, even the days or years remaining to us?"

The eager, tear-swept faces of the mothers and the clinched hands and drawn brows of Lûvon and Dammą were more eloquent than their expressions of fullest accord with his utterances.

"Now," he said, "we must act on the instant lest Zeydon may deem it wise to have us placed under restraint. So, dear friends, hasten to make such preparation as may be necessary; for at earliest dawn we must depart for Dąo to lay before the Most High Priest Moûkarą, who is my kinsman and friend, a statement of your grievance: for it is only through his intervention that we may entertain the faintest hope of aid for our dearest ones. Though it may cost us all our possessions, aye, and our lives also, they shall be rescued, or we will go with them into the Silence."

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CHAPTER IX.

Early in the day following the events narrated Invaloû stole to his and Frona's trysting place, and in the secret cleft of the rock found a communication from Frona, which for a time drove him well nigh frantic.

It informed him of her fortuitous meeting with her kinsman, Oûman Mitsa; of what she had learned of their parents; of Oûman Mitsa's desire to make her his heiress; but of the result of his interview with Zeydon, she could say nothing; that when she had put into his hand her letter to him and to her parents, he had said: "Dear child, do not quite despair. All that can be done shall be done for your and Invaloû's rescue;" that immediately after Oûman Mitsa's departure Zeydon also had left the Litzen Rinada, and that, ere going away, he had not recalled her to his presence: for which she returned thanks to the merciful gods.

In conclusion, she said: "My Invaloû, from very terror my heart dies within me. Surely, either the end of our days or some worse doom is near at hand. But I dare not wish for deliverance at the hand of death; for, oh, heart of my heart, love makes my life so sweet that

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I shrink from going into the Silence, where I no more shall see thy dear face or hear thy words of tenderness, which lift me above envy of even the blest ones of Astranolạ.

"As yet, Zeydon has placed no restraint upon the small degree of freedom permitted us. But Invạloû, my dearest, I fear lest these may be the last words that I may be able to convey to thee. Still, be assured that I shall spare no reasonable risk to keep thee informed of whatever may occur to thy loving Fronạ."

Leaving to their sorrows and perplexities the hapless youth and maiden, we will, for a little, turn our attention elsewhere.

Of the high priest's subsequent movements we possess certain information; for, strangely enough, for a reason sufficient to himself, he kept a record of some peculiar experiences, which, to a degree, seem to have influenced his conduct. After his death, this record addressed to a certain person was found among his effects, and I have been permiitted to make such use of it as, in my judgment, may seem appropriate and just to both the living and the dead: for, though the dead go into the Silence and can make no gracious return for words of praise or defense against calumny to those who love them, their memory ever is

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sacred and, as it should be, only the good deeds of those who may have erred are remembered.

Thus, it shall be my earnest endeavor to cast upon the memory of the High Priest Zeydon no reproach, but rather to find excuse for the uprighteous deeds of one possessed of fine traits, but whose strength of character was not equal in all its parts.

Upon leaving the Litzen Rinadą, Zeydon returned directly to his residence, where he arrived at almost the same moment that ushered Oûman Mitsą into the home of the Nyassąs. Without delay he repaired to the temple, and in evident agitation approached the sanctuary, at whose entrance he paused, apparently fearing to enter. Again and again he raised his hands to put aside the heavy silken drapery of the doorway, and as often they fell nerveless at his side. At length, as though some desperate occasion urged him on, he suddenly drew the drapery aside and entered the outer sanctuary. But once inside a very panic seized upon his senses. Staggering towards a column, he clasped his arms about it to save himself from falling to the floor. As he leaned against it, panting as though for the breath of life, he muttered:

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"Fool! Fool and coward that I am! Have I not already counted the cost? And shall I now, after years of torture of heart and remorse of mind, weakly yield the prize for which I have risked all that I have and am? And if I win, what then? . . . What then?"

Throwing forward his hands as though to ward off some impending danger, he cried: "O ye Deific Ones of Astranolą, whose sinless nature so exempts you from human frailty that you experience naught of its love or hatred, of its joys or sorrows, or of its many temptations and lack of strength to resist them, have pity I pray you for one who has desired to do right, but who, alas! has been too weak to resist temptation. In my extremity I entreat you to save me from my depraved self, who am near the brink of ruin and despair."

Then in tender pleading tones he murmured: "Soimą! Soimą! Thou god of this inner sanctuary, who hitherto hath been my guide and counselor, hast thou forsaken me that I no longer hear thy voice in chiding or approval? Have I so grievously sinned that thou carest not for my woeful state? In listening to the voice of my own evil nature rather than to thee, who sought to restrain my wayward course, I fear that I have offended thee beyond

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forgiveness. Oh that Andûmaṇa had not created me! Oh that the Messenger Death might call me into the Silence! Nay, nay, thou dread one, take me not at my word, for I am so distraught that my speech belies my thought!" Then in deepest anguish, he wailed: "In the Silence I should never, never more see her lovely face. O Froṇa, Froṇa, thou golden-haired one! Though thou art as pure as the Deific One, and the fairest of Andûmaṇa's children, through my adhering love for thee I am accursed. . . . Accursed!"

His overwhelming agitation culminated in such agonized weeping and trembling that he sank to his knees, clinging to the column for support until exhausted nature produced an apathetic calmness. But ere he reached this state darkness had succeeded twilight, and only obscured light of the Sacred Sun of the holy inner sanctuary rendered objects visible. Then, wearily, he arose from his kneeling posture, and, after some hesitation, approached the golden veil screening the inner sanctuary, drew it aside and entered within the radiance of the Sacred Sun, which pierced the darkness with such intensity that to shade his eyes he drew over them the loose drapery of his sleeve and, after a little, closed the altar screen,

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which left the sanctuary in partial darkness.

Assuming near the altar a reverential position, he stood as though intently listening for some accustomed sound, and, as the soothing quiet of the place stole over his senses, he felt as though he were drifting, drifting away into an unknown region,—a region so strangely unfamiliar as to fill his mind with extreme surprise. As his eyes searched the landscape. he perceived that many persons were passing in all directions, and that, although everywhere there was a soft radiant light, some appeared as though surrounded by varying degrees of darkness, while others had about them a more or less luminous atmosphere.

To him, his state appeared to be one of double consciousness; for, while realizing that he was gazing upon an unfamiliar scene, he also realized that he was in the inner sanctuary of the temple. What most amazed him was, that he saw himself as two distinct individuals. About one personality was a radiance so luminous, so beautiful, that he knew of naught with which to compare it; while about the other was a dark, cloud—like envelope, upon which was reflected from somewhere what appeared to be thoughts and emotions, which he recognized as his own; and,

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as in great trepidation, he gazed upon the strange illusion, these thoughts and emotions assumed monstrous and threatening shapes, from which he in vain strove to escape.

Ah! what amazement, what shuddering disgust filled his consciousness when in these shapes he recognized the passions of arrogant pride, of vengeful anger, of hatred, of cruelty, of unhallowed desires and other base traits of human nature! Oh the horror of it all! the horror of it all! And that hideous something was Zeydon-a Gamala?—he who had regarded himself as a holy man, a priest consecrated for the uses of the Deific Ones! And now—how he loathed and shrank away from the dreadful creature that was himself!

And then, how it came about he never could comprehend, he seemed to hear the radiant personality gently but urgently calling: "I am Zeydon a Gamala: I am thy real self. Choose thou between the real man, the consecrated priest, and the true reflection of thy baser self! Choose, and choose quickly, lest the Deific Ones decree that during thy remaining days thou shalt abide within this monstrous shadow, and not within the radiance of thy better self!"

The voice ceased, but within the radiance

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of this personality Zeydon beheld reflections of all the nobler traits with which Andûmaṇa had endowed him, but which, through disuse, formed shapes as faint as mist wreaths floating upward towards Astranolạ. In deep shame and humility he cried: "I will abide with thee, I will abide with thee, thou radiant one." But even as he reached out after the luminous being, he felt himself so strongly drawn towards the darkly beclouded personality that in an agony of terror he cried: "I choose, I choose my better self!" As he reached out his arms, entreating the radiant one to save him from the monstrous being who sought to hold him fast, he staggered and fell prone before the altar, where, with haggard face and unseeing eyes, he lay until the sonorous chiming of the temple bell aroused him from the stupor into which he had fallen. As he passed from the sanctuary, the radiance of Andûmaṇa's shining abode was rising above the horizon, setting the sky aflame with crimson and golden banners of the Deific Ones, who thus herald the coming of the Infinite, the glorious Creator of all things.

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CHAPTER X.

Gentolą:—De L'Ester informs me that Dąo is to the planet Ento what to many of the peoples of Earth is the City of Rome. Since ancient times, not only has it been Ento's capital city, but it has also been the centre of ecclesiastical authority. What to Roman Catholic religionists Rome's greatest sacred edifice is, the great Temple Zim ever has been and is now to the peoples of Ento. Until the successful culmination of our mission, the utterances of its most high priests were as the utterances of Andûmaną, the Supreme One, whose representatives they were.

In the ceremonials of the temple Zim ever a large number of priests and priestesses, the very flower of the consecrated ones, were engaged; their beauty of person, their rich vestments, and those of the most high priest, adding much to spectacles of striking magnificence and impressive solemnity. Especially notable were the ceremonials of the several seasons,—of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, when from all over Ento came devout worshippers to offer at its altars their most valued possessions; and, until Andûmaną's

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message of supreme love for his rebellious children abolished human sacrifice, many came to embrace for the last time their cherished ones, whose dreadful doom we of these blessed days of freedom, from an observance of the sacrificial rite, shrink from contemplating.

It is recorded that the Most High Priest Moûkaraṇ was of an exceedingly benignant nature. So eminent was the tenderness of his heart that it became proverbial, and to this day the expression, "As tender-hearted as Moûkaraṇ" is in common use.

It is related of him that once, while walking in the temple garden, he espied a broken winged Zŷmas, which at his approach attempted to flutter away. But being too badly injured to escape, it could only express its pain and terror in affrighted, plaintive notes. Putting aside the hands of an attendant priest, Moûkaraṇ gently lifted the wounded creature to his breast, smoothing its plumage and, as best he could, allaying its terror. Then he bore it to one of his household skilled in healing, who eventually restored it to its usual strength of wing; but its attachment for its rescuer had grown with its strength, and it so persistently sought to remain near him, that it became a great favorite of his leisure hours;

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and at its death its ashes found security in a costly urn, which to this day is known as the Zŷmas Urn.

The relation of this incident may seem, as really it is, quite apart from the story which we are attempting to translate from our language into yours, which, owing to differences in religious beliefs, modes of thought and expression, we find a most difficult undertaking: so much so that at times our manner of speech may appear obscure. You may believe that we are doing our utmost to render our meanings intelligible. Where we may fail in doing so we crave your gracious indulgence, as well as that of any who may read that which concerns people of another planet but who are children of one common Parent, whom we name Andûmaṇa and whom you name God.

Genessano Allis Imo.

Early dawn found Oûman Mitsa and the Nyassas journeying swiftly towards Dao. At midday, with rich offerings in their hands, they attended the temple service, where the Most High Priest Moûkaraṇa, clothed in the magnificent robes of his exalted office, which but slightly accentuated the natural majesty of his bearing or the admirable beauty of his benign countenance, offered to Andûmaṇa

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grains, fruits, and the red and golden blooms emblematic of his glorious dwelling-place.

We who have beheld the greatness and grandeur of Ènto's chiefest temple, who have gazed with awed and worshipful eyes upon its sacred ceremonies, who have listened to the wondrous tones of its incomparable *voûhoidą whose volumes of sweetest melody so fill the vast edifice that to its vibrant tones the very foundations make tremulous reply; who, with intoxicated senses and adoring exaltation have heard the exquisitely harmonious sounds of the temple singers chanting praises of the glory and beneficence of The Supreme One, from whose shining abode glowing beams, falling downward through the immense Diąfon ēvoihą of the central dome, bathed the wondrously beautiful, snowy altar beneath it with blended hues of red and gold; who have realized that in the sacred person of the most high priest we have beheld the representative of Andûmaną's majesty and infinite power, will readily understand the state of mind of Oûman Mitsą and the Nyassąs as they gazed upon him in whose hands were the issues of their own and their children's happiness, or destruction.

*Resembling an organ.

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At the moment of mid-day, the attendant priests and priestesses having drawn away from the central altar, the most high priest, raising his hands and his eyes towards Andû-manạ's abode, in most reverent tones prayed:

"To thee, who art our Creator, Preserver, and, at thy will, our Destroyer, we, thy humble, helpless children, offer our adoration and our supplication. We adore thee, thou Supreme One, that thou hast created us to enjoy the life thou hast given us; and we supplicate thy mercy that our days may be many ere thou mayst call us into the Silence, to which it hath pleased thee at death to return us. For the wondrous expression of thy love and mercy which thou hast lately shown thy ignorant and rebellious children, we continually adore thee. And, even as thou art merciful to us, may we be merciful to each other and to all created things. As we may do unto others so do thou unto us. According to the measure of thy bounty, these, thy children, now desire to make to thee acknowledgment of their grateful thanks; and I, thy humblest suppliant, entreat thy acceptance of such offerings as they have brought for thy service. Rạû, Rạû, Rạû."

Save for faintest notes of the voûhoidạ,

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scarcely a sound broke the stillness of the assemblage, many of whom, with murmured thanks or fervent appeals to Andûmaṇa and the Deific Ones approached and laid upon the central altar their offerings of precious things, then quietly returned to their places. Others before retiring ceremoniously entreated the most high priest to grant them a private audience, to which he graciously assented.

The very last to approach were Oûman Mitsa and the Nyassas. Laying their offerings upon the altar, for a while with fervent prayers they entreated Andûmaṇa and the Deific Ones to regard them with favor. Then they drew near the most high priest and, kneeling at his feet, besought him that they might have private speech with his Sacredness.

These suppliants must indeed have presented a piteous spectacle; so piteous that from the lips of the vast assemblage issued a sound as of one prolonged sigh. Into Moûkaraṇa's usually impassive face grew an expression of troubled surprise and sympathy, for, in the somber countenance of one he recognized his distinguished kinsman Oûman Mitsa, and, as his searching gaze rested upon the haggard, woful faces of the others, he recalled a memory

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of two newly wedded pairs who years ago had besought his blessing upon their union.

With much kindliness of manner Moûkaraṇ desired the suppliants to arise from their kneeling posture, and, after signifying that at mid-afternoon he would receive them, he gently dismissed the Nyassaṣ.

Turning to Oûman Mitsaṇ he said, "I know not which is greatest, my pleasure or my surprise, at finding my distinguished kinsman suing for my favor,—but not for himself, I feel assured."

With a profound obeisance Oûman Mitsaṇ thanked him for his gracious courtesy, and said. "Your Sacredness, the cause of those unhappy ones, the Nyassaṣ of a suburb of Lēonita Tŷlû, who through my dear, dead wife are related to me, is mine also; and for its justness I pledge my honor and my life. May I hope that when they shall make known their grievance to you I may be permitted to speak to you on their behalf?"

"Let it be so," replied Moûkaraṇ; "and may the wisdom of Andûmanaṇ and the just gods direct us in all our ways. At mid-afternoon with your friends I will receive you."

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CHAPTER XI.

Towards the evening of this most memorable day, the inhabitants of Lēonita Tŷlû and the surrounding country observed that along the line of the western horizon dark threatening clouds partly obscured the lingering rays of Andûmaṇa's shining abode, which yet found expression in purple, crimson and golden clouds, flaunting their ever-changing beauty far up towards the zenith. Across the face of nature fell gradually an ever darkening veil of lights and shadows, which gave to all things a strangely unreal appearance. The breeze which during the day had tempered the unusually sultry atmosphere, died away until foilage and flowers maintained a deathlike stillness. From the crests of the lofty Bûdas trees to the low growing shrubs, birds, from all directions, came in rapid flight, their incessant chirping and chattering betokening unusual excitement. Noises from afar came drifting, drifting with startling distinctness, and suddenly the pealing of temple bells smote the hushed air with such impetuous volumes of sound that all things seemed to vibrate in unison with their rythmic tones.

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Upward, upward from the horizon, swiftly climbed the darkening clouds, their outskirts like monstrous wings overshadowing upland and lowland with ominous permonitions of an approaching tempestuous disturbance of the atmosphere. So strange, so uncommon, so alarming grew the indications of a destructive storm, that men, women and children hastened to city and suburban temples, seeking within their substantial walls the protection of the just and pitiful gods. As their flying feet sped onward, deeper, darker grew the murky cloud shadows, more and more profound the stillness that ever precedes a visitation of the powers of the air.

Nowhere yet was stir of leaf or of blade of grass, and nature, hushed and breathlessly expectant, awaited the dread onslaught. From out the black bosom of the swiftly moving clouds vivid flashes of lightning illumined the awful spectacle, and low muttering thunder betokened the advance of the angry storm gods. In the temples the affrighted people prayed for protection against their pitiless assaults, but their prayers availed naught, for almost instantaneously the profound calm gave way to furious blasts of wind, lightning, deafening thunder and rain, which swept so madly

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across the sky and over the face of the land that they left in their pathway death and destruction unparalleled.

In *Yaffa ą Lûytos, the temple of which Zeydon was high priest, cries of fear and despair mingled with the roaring rage of the elements, which shook the massive structure as though it were a mere bauble which at any moment might crush the terrified people beneath its ruins.

At the height of the tempest, a flash of blinding lightning, accompanied by thunder so terrific as to be appalling, smote the great crystal Diąfon ēvoihą of the temple dome, beneath which the High Priest Zeydon, with uplifted hands, was praying. Without word or cry he fell unconscious near the central altar, the fragments of the shattered Diąfon ēvoihą crashing downward upon its beautiful statues and upon the prostrate and unconscious form of the high priest. Such consternation ensued that, for a time, no one ventured to approach the wounded, helpless man, who, stunned and breathless, lay as one smitten by death. Presently the violence of the tempest began to abate, and the people, recovering to

*A noted Entoan Temple.

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a degree from their terror, summoned Zeydon's attendants, who bore him to his residence, where, under the skillful ministration of his physician, he was restored to life, but not to consciousness.

Not for centuries had that portion of Ento been subjected to such a devastating tempest as this one, which had swept from its pathway all that came within the scope of its terrific energy. The spacious and substantial residence of the Nyassąs, being outside its vortex, escaped with but slight injury; but the residence of the high priest was not so fortunate, its walls being so shaken as to render it insecure for occupation. Until it should be restored, it was found that it would be necessary to house its inmates elsewhere. Koidassą being near at hand and the situation urgent Zeydon, in an unconscious state, was borne to one of its spacious chambers, where for many days death stood upon the threshold.

The lightning stroke and the wounds on his hands and head were but incidents along the line of causes which led to Zeydon's very dangerous condition. More than all else, his long continued mental struggle had induced a low state of vital resistance against any physical shock. Now, like a prostrate giant, he battled

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for life against formidable odds; for almost immediately a violent fever attacked him, so dethroning his reason that his incongruous speech filled the minds of his attendants with surprise and alarm.

In his delirium he raved of temple ceremonies, of instruction of the Litzen Rinạdạ novices, of two strange beings who, to his disordered mind, appeared to be contending against each other that they might gain possession of him. So piteous were his appeals for rescue, so violent his attempts to escape from this imaginary danger, that they found much difficulty in their attempts to restrain his frenzied state. Other strange hallucinations at times took possession of him, but through all the tortuous mazes of his wild imaginings ran one most noticeable theme, to which his disturbed thoughts constantly returned. This theme was Fronạ Nyassạ.

To his attendants this feature of his ravings was incomprehensible. As they, in much trepidation, listened to his murmured praises of her loveliness of face and form, of her gentleness and charm of mind and speech, they marveled that the gods permitted a consecrated one, even in delirium, to associate his thought with mortal love.

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In the midst of a frenzied outburst of fantastic imaginings, suddenly his disordered mind would recur to the one dominant thought, and in tender, caressing tones he would murmur: "Fronạ, Fronạ, thou light of my darkened life, thou balm of my tortured mind and heart.

"Fronạ, thou fairest and most adorable of all created things, turn not away from me in affright and anger. Ere I die I beseech thee to look, if but once, into the eyes that have found only thee worthy of my tenderest devotion. Look and let me find one expression of love, one faintest ray of hope that thou wilt suffer me to love thee, and I will arise and defy the gods who strive to tear me from thy presence. Ah! thou art as cold as ice. Thou hast in thy heart no place for love: thou art too pure to yield thyself to human passion. A goddess art thou, Fronạ, for even in thy childhood all hearts turned to thee, all eyes gazed with wondering admiration upon the marvel of thy exceeding loveliness, all lips smiled when thine were parted in laughter or in mirthful speech. Yes, a goddess art thou who hast taken upon thyself mortal form, that thus thou mayst inform thyself of the joys and

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sorrows, and of the good and evil emotions of men and women."

Thus he would rave until, through exhaustion, he would fall into incoherent mutterings, or a stupor from which he would arouse, crying: "It is I alone who have sinned; I alone who am culpable; I alone who merit punishment. O thou radiant One who in the inner sanctuary didst reveal thyself to me, save me—save me from this hideous being who drags me down—down to dishonor, to degradation and to death! Soimą, Soimą, thou mighty god of the inner sanctuary, come, oh, come to my rescue! Save me, save me from this monster who tempts me beyond my strength! Save me, or I shall perish in my guilt—I shall go into the Silence a self-condemned and wretched man!"

Through many days and nights of ceaseless torture of mind and body, Zeydon struggled for existence. But at last a period arrived when, emaciated to a shadow of his former self, and helpless as an infant, the fire cooled in his veins, the turmoil of his senses became tranquilized, and a blessed sleep closed his staring, sunken eyes in a forgetfulness so profound that it very nearly resembled the unending sleep of death.

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I pray that the just gods may account me blameless for writing that, while holding in my unsteady hands this pitiful record, which portrays some features of Zeydon's expiation, I find my heart throbbing with sympathy for his suffering, which, in a sense he certainly deserved. Were I a god I might righteously decide the extent of his deserving: being human, I desire that only pity for his errors may find lodgment in my mind and heart.

There are, I doubt not, those whose self-righteousness will impel them to pass merciless judgment upon Zeydon's weakness and his transgression of his vows of consecration. To such I would say "Thou knowest neither thy strength or thy weakness; and until thou hast been tempted and tried as he was tempted and tried, withhold thy condemnation."

I, who revere all that is exalted in Andûmaṇa, the Deific Ones, or in his children, find my no longer youthful eyes moist with tears as I read of the struggles of this man, whose nature partook of both the best and the basest traits of the human and who at last, through bitter anguish and earnest endeavor, overcame evil with good. So, through overcoming whatever in our nature is least admirable, may we, as Zeydon did, arrive at a state of mind where

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Rosera—an Ento Plant not found on Earth.

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we may be able to perceive that at times the gods leave us to find our own ways that thus we may learn that Andûmaṇa, in not creating us perfect, has afforded us an opportunity to ever strive to attain to the height of our loftiest ideals. For in our striving we grow strong, and thus are enabled to resist temptation and to express in our lives that we indeed are the children of the Supreme One, who hath given us choice between good and evil.

While leaving to your gentle or ungentle judgment the degree of Zeydon's guilt, I also will leave him to the watchful care of his devoted attendants while I shall turn to a consideration of other interests.

The expanse of country over which the tempest swept with such devastating fury was quite extensive, but its greatest violence was expended upon Lēonitą Tẏlû and its suburban village. From the southwest to the northeast it rushed with indescribable velocity, leaving the northwestern portion of the city in ruins and killing and maiming many of the inhabitants. Fortunately Moûtsen ken ąvą was a little aside from the pathway of its greatest energy else its destruction must have been complete. As it was, the immense structure, with the exception of a lecture hall and the central

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audience room was razed to its foundation. To add to the danger and horror of the situation, from a wrecked out-building fire burst forth, spreading with such frightful rapidity that only the tremendous downpour of rain and the strenuous efforts of many willing hands after a time extinguished it, but not until it destroyed much that was of value.

At the time it was considered remarkable that none of the inmates of the Litzen Rinądą were killed instantly, but a large number were more or less injured, some fatally. Aside from a severe contusion of one arm Iavąloû escaped injury, but Froną was less fortunate. Fleeing for safety from one wrecked portion of the Litzen Rinądą to another, which a moment later met with a like disaster, a flying timber struck her down rendering her unconscious and fracturing a limb in a most serious manner.

Amid the terror and confusion of the awful visitation she and Invąloû frantically had sought each other but it was not until the tempest died away into fitful gusts of wind and rain that, aided by incessant electric flashes, which lighted up the darkness, Invąloû found the unconscious girl whom he thought dead. Taking her up in his strong,

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loving arms, he bore her to the audience room, where were congregated the resident physician, Amman Eldą, and the terrified injured and uninjured priests and novices. Presently, under the influence of restoratives, Froną revived and made known her condition, which demanded immediate attention. This Ammen Eldą sought to give, but through lack of proper appliances, he could not for the immediate moment afford her and other injured ones even relief. On every hand were entreaties for assistance, but so unprecedented was the calamity which had befallen the city and its suburbs that it was found impossible to at once provide sufficient accommodation for the many injured persons, whose cries and moans filled all minds with consternation and commiseration.

Several of the resident priests being badly injured also required attention, while those who were uninjured were so overwhelmed by the disaster which had befallen the Litzen Rinądą and its inmates, that for a time they were in a state of helpless bewilderment as to how to dispose of their hapless charges.

As the situation admitted of no delay, Invą-loû suggested that he with Froną and other injured ones might be conveyed to the residence

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of his and Fronạ's parents, where, he assured the distraught priests, they would receive welcome hospitality and all necessary attention. But, until the high priest should be heard from, no one dared to accept his proposition. Very soon the appalling news arrived that through a lightning shock he was dead at Yaffa ạ luytos. As no other solution of the difficulty presented itself, it was decided that Invạloû's proposition should immediately be carried into effect.

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CHAPTER XII.

In Dạo, Oûman Mitsạ and the Nyassạs, in agonizing, trembling expectancy, awaited the decision of the Most High Priest Moûkarạ, in which was involved all that concerned the safety and happiness of themselves and their beloved children.

The critical moment having arrived, they found themselves in the presence of Moûkarạ, whose kindly smile and gracious manner afforded them assurance of at least a friendly hearing. To Lûvon and Dammạ he expressed a desire that they should, as directly as possible, state the occasion of their seeking an audience with him.

Dammạ, being the more fluent speaker, related with much earnestness and precision the events leading to their most unhappy condition, and with the passionate language of a loving father besought the most high priest to judge between them and the High Priest Zeydon's arbitrary views.

To this appeal Moûkarạ listened with most tolerant attention. Then, turning to Lûvon, Tillēne and Avạnnạ, he closely interrogated them concerning the discharge of their religi-

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ous duties, involving as they must their duties towards their children. Finally he asked: "Have you continually sought to teach your children, whom Andûmaṇa gave into your keeping, the obligations of our holy religion? Have you, at all times, made generous acknowledgment of all the bounteous blessings he has bestowed upon you and yours? Withholding naught that might be adverse to your cause, answer me truly."

Avaṇṇa, more impetuous than Tillēne, burst into such a torrent of eloquent assertion and fervent appeal that for a time the sympathy of the man so dominated the dignity and self-control of the priest that, to conceal his emotion, he turned his head aside.

In closing her unstudied appeal, Avaṇṇa, with most graceful movement, threw herself at Moûkaraṇa's feet and pressed the border of his robe to her quivering lips, murmuring: "O Most High Sacredness, in the early days of our wedded life thou didst bless the union of Lûvon and Tillēne, of Dammaṇa and myself, and we pray that thou mayst not allow the inconsiderate act of one whose judgment was at fault to set at naught the benediction thou didst bestow upon us!"

Surely some pitiful god must have inspired

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Avaṇṇaṇ to utter these words, and, as she timidly and reverently raised her wondrously beautiful eyes towards Moûkaraṇ's years vanished, and he recalled the memory of an almost divinely lovely bride, upon whose golden-haired head he had laid his hands in benediction.

Stooping from his majestic height he clasped her hands within his own and raised her to her feet. "Be at peace," he said. "Thou child of the One whose creative power hath made thee and me and these thy kindred of one flesh; if thou and these children of Andûmaṇaṇ have suffered wrong at the hands of one who should protect thee and them, the just gods will right thee and them!"

Turning to Oûman Mitsaṇ, whose benignant, handsome countenance varying emotions were paling and flushing by turns, Moûkaraṇ said: "Silence, my kinsman, sits well upon thy lips. But now I would hear thy speech in behalf of these, thy kindred and friends."

Among the distinguished personages of his day Oûman Mitsaṇ's eloquence was considered preëminent, and now, with his theme so near his heart, Moûkaraṇ listened to his words as though bereft of all sense save hearing; and, when, in concluding his appeal, he read to the

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shocked and astounded dignitary Fronạ's piteous letter, such a rush of color overspread his fine face and such an indignant gleam enkindled his splendid eyes that, for a moment, his suppliants were alarmed lest some evil thing might befall him. But quickly he regained his composure, and with much suavity of manner said: "Oûman, my dear kinsman, I could not have expected less of thee than what thou art attempting to accomplish for these, thy peculiarly unfortunate relatives and friends. I recall that, at the time their children were placed in the Litzen Rinadạ, I was appealed to for a decision as to the propriety of their removal from the care of their parents, who were represented to me as having been remiss in their religious and parental obligations. I reproach myself that I permitted the stress of many cares to interfere with a closer scrutiny of the case, which I now perceive should have received my careful attention. Be assured that I shall not delay a righteous adjustment of this lamentable affair."

With further words of kindliest import Moûkarạ was about to dismiss them, when upon all ears fell a most alarming sound: the sonorous ringing of the great temple bell, indicating, through its peculiar signal strokes,

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that some imminent danger threatened some portion of Ento.

Instantly summoning an attendant, Moûkaraṇ received information which fell, for the moment, upon the ears of his suppliants with stupefying force.

An awful, an appalling tempest was sweeping over a portion of Lēonita Tŷlû and the country southwest of the city.

That was all that was yet known, but it was sufficient to fill the minds of the Nyassaṣ and Oûman Mistaṇ with direst apprehension for the safety of Invaṇloû, Froṇaṇ and many dear friends. With grateful but somewhat incoherent expressions of their appreciation of Moûkaraṇ's kindness and consideration, they received his blessing and hastened away to learn further of what had befallen the unfortunates of the storm-swept localities.

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CHAPTER XIII.

To facilitate a clearer understanding of certain features of this little story, it seems advisable that I shall offer such information as may render intelligible what otherwise may appear inconclusive.

Decimon Hûŷdąs, the author of the story, was not a writer of fiction, but a noted mathematician; hence, his style lacks the continuity and conciseness of the trained literary writer. I might take the liberty of arranging the events and incidents of the story to suit my own ideas, but I prefer that my recital shall retain his quaint manner of expression. As he did not anticipate that "A Romance of Ento" might become known to the peoples of another planet, he confined himself to what concerned the peoples of his own world and time.

Inferentially, he conveys the information that in his time, corresponding, De L'Ester says, to your ninth century, travellers passed quickly from one locality to another. Naturally, queries may arise as to what manner of conveyance made this possible. Without entering into particulars as to the various means

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of transportation on our planet, I may say that long antecedent to your earliest historical records, both land and air transportation had with us become so perfected as to afford safe and speedy conveyance for all the requirements of travel and commerce. I also may state that with us wireless telegraphy has been in common use during many Ento centuries.

On our side of life it is well known that, in time, the humans of all planets of like conditions arrive at, or near, the same conclusions. How can it be otherwise, since in the human are all the infolded possibilities of infinite, intelligent creative force: and, given like, or similar, conditions, imperative, immutable law compels unfoldment in like, or similar directions. Thus it occurs that, Ento and Earth being much alike as to constitution and conditions, evolvement of both planets and all pertaining to them must proceed along similar lines.

It may not be amiss to say, that we are able to perceive that in the near future a man of your people will so perfect air transportation as to make it practicable; and that, ere long another inspired mind will astound your world with a discovery by which your fuel may be so cheaply procured from outside the earth,

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that your coal mining horrors will become an unpleasant memory of the past.

I now will resume the relation of "A Romance of Ento," which, I doubt not, my auditors will feel inclined to pronounce a tragedy as well as a romance.

Genessano Allis Immo.

During the night succeeding the tempest, from all over the area devastated by its terrific energies, arose agonizing cries of distress of mind and body. In rural localities the destruction of life was remarkably great. Whole villages having been drawn within its vortex, were left shapeless ruins, amid which the dead, the dying, the injured and the grief-stricken and terrified survivors presented a ghastly and heart-rending spectacle.

Upon the southwestern and beyond the northeastern suburbs of the city, the tempest concentrated its utmost fury; so sudden was its coming that everyone was so overwhelmed with fear that they scarcely attempted to protect themselves.

It cannot be said that the residents of the city and surrounding villages were not forewarned as to the possible destructive energy

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of the approaching tempest, for indeed its course and velocity were duly signalled. But so swiftly had it swept over them that in a few awful moments it came and was gone, leaving in its pathway desolation unspeakable. To the survivors of the calamity it ever was a memory filled with grief and horror.

Ere the tempest had quite spent itself all Ento knew of the terrible disaster that had befallen their unfortunate brothers and sisters, and quickly air transports and *Tuzamos were carrying to their assistance men and women skilled in the sciences of surgery and healing, and all that minds, hearts and generous means could offer was placed at the service of the sufferers, to whom that first night of dismay and sorrow was one continuous horror.

To Invaloû and Frona, that which had so suddenly, so unexpectedly, befallen them was as a half-waking dream. Only their physical pain seemed real. That in a short time they might be in the arms of their beloved parents was beyond their power of realization. But Frona's case growing more and more alarming, and no immediate means being available for her relief, it became imperative to remove

*Tramway carriages.

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her at once to Koidassą. Under the influence of an opiate, which rendered her insensible to her condition, accompanied by Invąloû and other injured ones, she was quickly borne to the home of her childhood.

In the early dawn she slowly awakened to the consciousness that she was in her own room and lying upon the pretty couch she so well remembered. And oh! joy of joys supreme, over her bent the faces of her dear parents, and close by were Invąloû, his parents and Oûman Mitsą, on whose tear-swept countenances she read joy and love unutterable.

In presence of such a sacred scene, well might one's eyes fall abashed. Only the just gods, who in their own inscrutable way had made it possible, could with tearless eyes have looked upon the marvelously strange reunion of parents and children, who through hopeless years had longed for each other as we all long for a sight of the faces and forms of our dear dead whom, alas, we know we shall see no more.

So great was the joy of once more beholding their dearest ones, that for the time neither Invąloû's or Froną's parents thought of what the future might bring to them and their children. It was enough to have recovered them

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if but for a day. By her parents even Froṇa's serious injury was regarded as an immeasurable blessing, for had not it been the means through which their darling had been brought to their arms? Aye! to their arms which had so longed to embrace their beloved, their beauteous daughter, now grown and ripened into a womanhood of such exquisite and wonderful loveliness as to be incomparable—so incomparable, indeed, that one can find excuse for her fond father saying, "Damma, heart of my heart think me not foolish: but our child is so beautiful, so marvelously charming, that in my mind I find growing a sense of pity for Zeydon. Even a god might not gaze unmoved upon her matchless loveliness."

And the proud and loving husband and father smiled fondly into his wife's eyes as he said, "As the child is, so wert thou, my dearest one, when the gods gave thee to me."

In both Koidassa and Amatû, which yet are substantial and handsome residences, are portraits of Invaloû and Froṇa, painted about one year later than the period in which the tempest occurred. I question if on all Ento are two personalities surpassing in charm of feature and form the son and daughter of the Nyassas.

Aside from the serious fracture of Froṇa's

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limb it soon became apparent that she had received other alarming injuries, and for a time her condition was too precarious to admit of her being informed that Zeydon, also, was an inmate of Koidassą. At intervals faint tones of his delirious ravings reached her ears, but as she was aware that there were other sufferers in the spacious residence, the sounds were easily accounted for. Neither, at the time, was she informed that in one apartment death had noiselessly entered and had borne into the Silence a maiden novice who in the Litzen Rinadą had been her dearest friend and closest companion. Azēon, the god of love, never had touched the heart of this maiden, through whose unkissed lips the breath of her young life departed into nothingness; but her woman's heart had read Invąloû's and Froną's secret, and she had guarded it as though it were her own. Loving hearts mourned over her dead body, and loving hands bore it tenderly away to receive the last sad service they could offer.

As assuredly it should be the influence of our holy religion dominates the thoughts and conduct of all right-minded persons. Being the highest expression of human advancement, naturally it should take precedence of the civil

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A Flower of Ento, Name Unknown.

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government, which, through various exigencies, must necessarily accommodate its functions to changed conditions. Not so our holy religion, which never changes.

It is true that since the establishment of its sacred doctrines and rites, Andûmaṇa, in accordance with his will, from time to time hath, through his highest representatives, our most high priests, granted to his children special proofs of his boundless love for them: but our holy religion and its admirable ceremonials remain, and ever will remain, unchanged. With a full understanding of its demands, to Oûman Mitsa and the Nyassas, who were dutiful children of Andûmaṇa and devout observers of his Commandments, it did not occur to question the authority of his highest representative, the Most High Priest Moûkaṛa. So between hope and fear the days passed, and they awaited the decision which for them meant life and immeasurable joy, or death and endless Silence.

All the avenues of information being open to the Most High Priest, he readily procured minutest information concerning the lives of the Nyassas, which he found singularly blameless. Even their altar offerings had been munificent, and, wherever required, their gen-

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erosity had been so unsparing as to be noticeable. As for their instruction of their children, it had ever been of a character to impress their young minds with most exalted views concerning religion and the ordinary duties of life. And among their numerous friends, indeed by all with whom they shared a mutual acquaintance, their children were considered models of fine conduct.

He also learned that, late in the afternoon of the memorable evening of Invaloû's and Froṇa's removal to Moutsen ken avạ, with positive instruction to return in time for the temple service, they had permitted the children to row on the lake. Unfortunately, they were a little belated, which afforded the High Priest Zeydon the color of an excuse for the separation from their parents. This and more of favorable import came to the most high priest's knowledge, but until Tŷmonas, the wise and just god of the inner sanctuary of the Temple Zım, should declare Andûmaṇạ's mind, Moûkaṛạ would not presume to speak concerning the disposition of their children.

Though I do not mean to unduly palliate Zeydon's offense, while reading the faded record of his expiation I find myself somewhat resentful towards certain persons who, at the

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time it was made known, and since, have in a self-righteous manner commented upon his strange conduct. While one must admit that in his behavior towards the Nyassa̧s he did not do as he would have desired another to do by him, one must also admit that he was sorely tempted, else he never could have so dishonored, not only his vows of consecration, but his position as High Priest of Ya̧ffa̧ a̧ Luy̆tos.

It may be thought that I, who am so far advanced in years, should be less lenient and more critical in my estimation of the behavior of others. But as the passing days draw me nearer to the Silence I find myself looking backward to my youth, when I, too, loved one of Ento's fairest and sweetest daughters. Until death stole her from my arms I so adored her, that in comparison with her all else was valueless. Though many years have gone since I was left in loneliness, even yet the memory of my beloved, lost Elza inclines my heart to sympathize with all who lose themselves in the mazes of the resistless passion: whose rewards are joy ineffable, or despair unfathomable.

I am far from being so presumptuous as to compare my characteristics with those of one

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so exalted as the Most High Priest Moûkaraṇ, who by sacred historians is mentioned as a man of extreme purity of mind and heart, and as one who ever tempered justice with mercy. But I readily understand, that in considering Zeydon's case he would take into account, that though he had greatly sinned, he also had suffered much.

Of all that concerned Zeydon, Invaloû and Froṇa, he finally became fully aware; and as he considered the strange combination of circumstances which had brought to them such remarkable and almost fatal results he became strongly confirmed in the belief that, through Andûmaṇa's permission, the mighty gods are largely the arbiters of the affairs of men.

Immediately after the storm subsided the peoples of our beloved Ento became informed as to particulars concerning its lamentable destruction of life and property; of the High Priest Zeydon's probably fatal injury and removal to Koidassa; of what had befallen Invaloû and Froṇa, and of their return to the home of their parents; of the partial destruction of the high priest's residence; of the almost total demolition of Moûtsen ken ava, and of the distribution of the uninjured priests and novices among other Litzen Rinadas. From many

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sources came messages of sympathy and generous proffers of assistance.

Upon investigation, the temple residence was found in such a ruinous state as to require its entire reconstruction; and when at last the prematurely aged and broken Zeydon gazed upon the spacious and beautiful structure which, through the sympathy, piety and munificence of those under his charge, was nearing completion, his tearful eyes and quivering lips attested to his appreciation of the kindness of those whom formerly he had regarded as mere appendages to his sacred dignity.

Was ever man so changed as was this cold reserved priest Zeydon ą Gamąlą. This man whose life, up to a certain period, was so blameless that in his self-righteous view of himself he had felt himself above and apart from human sins, sympathies and sorrows.

But something had occurred. Ah, yes, something had occurred to dissipate into nothingness his former estimate of himself. Through unspeakable agony of body and anguish of mind he had learned the meaning of the vision of the sanctuary, and, praise be to the pitying and merciful gods, the radiant one, the better part of himself, had conquered. Away into

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the darkness of the sinful past, from which he turned with a shudder of horror and remorse, the monstrous being, his baser self, had fled; and with humble heart and faltering steps he for the first time since his protracted illness turned his footsteps towards the temple. Slowly, laboriously he ascended the great flight of steps leading up to the main entrance. Upon reaching it he turned and gazed upon scenes he had thought he might not again behold. Yonder, in the distance, the late afternoon Diafon ēvoihą touched, as with fiery fingers, the lofty domes and towers of Lēonitą Tŷlû. Through the greenery of shrubs and trees he caught glimpses of the quiet, pretty lake upon which fronted the home of the Nyassąs, where, during his long illness, he had found shelter and such boundless hospitality as only persons of ample means and extreme kindness of heart could have bestowed.

And Froną was there. But Froną was dead to him; yes dead to him. He had put her away out of his life; she who never should have entered it. But the fault, the sin, was his own, and he had suffered for his sin. Oh! how he had suffered. But that he must forget: it should no longer torture him; he could endure no more; he would try to live that he

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might serve his people; he would make their joys his joys, their sorrows his sorrows; he would strive to make all possible reparation for his sin: and in time peace might return to his unhappy mind and heart.

Then his somber gaze wandered over the glowing myriad blooms of the temple garden and over the fountain groups, from whose parted lips or extended hands silvery jets shot upward to fall in showers of jeweled drops. Along one pathway memory led his brooding thoughts; and, as he recalled the strange vision that had come to him there he murmured: "Ever the memory of it clings to me, and ever my unquiet thoughts are asking, What if it may be true? Perchance Andûmaṇa, the All Wise, conceals from his children a truth that might unfit them for their present existence. But I am naught but a dreamer, and the land of my glorious vision was a land of dreams, as unsubstantial as the fabric of cloud shadows, or the memories of dead faces of our vanished loved ones. And ere long I shall be but a memory to—whom? Alas, to no one but to those who will think of me as of one who never gave sign of love or sympathy for others." Then with humbled heart and faltering steps he turned and entered the quiet

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temple, where for a little while he glanced at the restored altar and crystal Diafon ēvoiha, irradiated by paling beams: Andûmaṇa's disappearing abode. At length he moved toward the inner sanctuary, drew aside the heavy drapery and once again stood before the glowing emblem of the dwelling place of the Creator of all things. Sinking to his knees, he drew the skirt of his robe across his face, and, for a time, naught but his faint breathing broke the stillness. Then in broken, tremulous tones he cried: "Oh Soimą, Soimą, thou ever constant one, who when Death would have borne me into the Silence, entreated that I might be spared to make reparation for my sinful conduct, my inexcusable wickedness: I implore thee, Soimą, to bear to Andûmaṇa my humble entreaty for the pardon of my shameful violation of my vows of consecration. Plead for me, Soimą, as thou wouldst plead for thyself wert thou a sinful man, fallen through weakly yielding to the mad passions of human nature! Plead for me, that the Deific Ones may give me strength to grow pure in heart and so humble in mind that I may be as dust under the feet of those whom I have so grievously wronged. And thus may I, ere I shall go into

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the Silence, obtain peace of mind and ease of my heavy, aching heart."

Gentola ēmana: Ere Genessano resumes the recital of a Romance of Ento, which nears its conclusion, I desire to say that its chief purpose is to present to those who may read it some glimpses of the social and religious life of peoples known to earth's dwellers as Marsians, but who know themselves as *Entoans, which in their language signifies "chosen" or "set apart."

We are aware that against the sombrous coloring of the story, the tastes of some persons may revolt, but to those who seek for truth under whatsoever guise it may present itself, the end in view may incline them to a favorable consideration of the means we are constrained to use, in order that we may convey a correct, though very circumscribed presentation of certain features pertaining to peoples so like those of our own planet as to offer no radical differences.

The events of the story preceded, by about one Ento country, Genessano's departure into Ento's spirit realms, which occurred during our tenth century: yet you and we have had opportunity of observing that the Entoans,

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after the lapse of several centuries, have not as a whole, progressed very noticeably.

It is a truth, that the progress of what is termed civilization when applied to the entire peoples of any planet is by nearly imperceptible degrees. The advancement all along the line of human endeavor is never simultaneous. Yet no individual or collective movement is ever lost: it remains an added force to the sum total of evolvement, whose activities are unceasing and unerring.

No other inhabited planet of our solar system presents, in all directions, correspondences so noticeable as those which exist between Ento and Earth; and were I a prophet, or the son of a prophet, I would predict, that ere the close of the present century communication, on a scientific spirit basis, will be established between the two worlds known, astronomically, as Earth and Mars.

Why do I make this statement? For the reason that we on the spirit side are aware that there are forces at work which are making the ways straight for inspired ones who are coming to perceive that, back of material science, there is a spirit science which is to material science what substance is to its shadow. And when this truth shall have be-

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come fully recognized, as ere long it will be, communication between the physically disembodied peoples of two closely related worlds and their mortal brethren will become so clearly established as to be of common occurrence.

CARL DE L'ESTER,
Guide and Interpreter.

Autumn deepened into Winter, and Winter merged into Spring, through whose wooing all nature burst into buds, blooms and upspringing verdure, clothing the face of the land as with a silken carpet. Ere long Spring with outreaching hands and smiling, perfumed lips welcomed her royal successor, glowing Summer, the Queen of all the Seasons, who brought in her gorgeous train a bounteous harvest of grains and delicious fruits for the sustenance of Andûmaṇa's children.

Throughout the area of the storm swept localities busy hands had been, and were yet, engaged in the restoration of wrecked homes and other structures; and now, though less than a year had elapsed, only suggestions of the havoc of the tempest remained to mark its devastating course. But during this lapse of time, in the affairs of those of whom I write, notable changes had occurred. Through ter-

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ror and physical injury, Fronạ barely escaped from passing into the Silence. Finally, through most scientific treatment and careful, loving attention, she began to revive, and, now in early Summer she was strong enough to listen, for the first time, to a recital of all concerning the tempest and its consequences.

For some time she had known that the high priest was an inmate of Koidassạ, but only now did she learn of what had occasioned his presence there, and that, although he had been made acquainted with the disastrous effects of the tempest, and that she and Invạloû also were at Koidassạ, he had expressed but slight interest concerning affairs pertaining to himself and no desire to see either of them. Thus although for many months they had been sheltered under the same roof, he and his charges had not confronted each other.

During all this wearing, anxious time, Oûman Mitsạ was not idle. Through repeated visits to the Most High Priest Moukarạ he had made the true state of the Nyassạ's affairs so clear to His Sacredness' mind that it only remained that Zeydon should have a hearing, before appealing to the great God Tŷmonas, of the inner sanctuary, concerning Andûmanạ's will towards Invạloû and Fronạ. But

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as yet this must be delayed until Zeydon should be sufficiently recovered to journey to Dạo.

By detailing the various events of the daily lives of the Nyassạs and others concerned in this story, we might, were we so inclined, greatly lengthen the number of its pages. But heart aches are ever plentiful, and I doubt the taste and judgment of a narrator who seeks to multiply or color occurrences beyond the bounds of either propriety or probability, or to wound the sensibilities of those whose kindly emotions ever respond to all that appeals to gentle natures. So, upon the events and scenes preceding the closing of my narrative, I shall touch but briefly.

It is quite reasonable to suppose that only those, into whose charge Andûmaṇạ has given his children, can understand the peculiar intensity of parental love, to which nature sets no bounds. In the case of the Nyassạs, the tragic events of recent years so exalted and intensified their love for their children that they counted all else as of small value. As from day to day they observed the spontaneous expressions of affection between the two young, guileless creatures, Invạloû and Froṇạ, their minds and hearts were filled with anxiety

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and dread of what the near future might hold in store for them. As yet, they had received no assurance that their children would be released from either the custody of Zeydon or the claims of the *Unatûzzą Fundoitsą. The utmost that Moûkarą would say was, "Wait. Zeydon must first be heard, then, as Andûmaną may decree, so must it be."

To the youthful, buoyant minds of Invąloû and Froną the past was fading into oblivion. They had each other; they were within the shelter of their dear home and the arms of their adored and adoring parents. Surely, surely the sorrowful past would not repeat itself; the days and nights of dread and terror would return no more: and they smiled into each other's eyes and murmured words of love and were content. The days fled on wings of fear, and under their breath the parents questioned each, "What shall we do, if the most high priest may not save them and us? What shall we do?" Though their lips made no reply in the sternly set faces of Lûvon and Dammą and the tearful eyes of Tillēne and Avanną each read a reply that stilled their heart beats. "Yes, yes," they said,

*Ecclesiastical Court.

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"there is but one way; and if needs be we all will walk it together." Then to their happy children they gave smile for smile and from their anxious, heavy hearts they spoke to them words of cheer. The days fled away, and they waited, waited, waited.

Towards mid-afternoon of a warm, windless day, in the family of the Nyassas quite a notable event occurred. Frona, who for so long had laid at the parting ways of life and death, had at last so far recovered as to express a desire to sit under the shade of the Bûdas trees, as so long, long ago she and Invaloû had sat, listening to the wind in their great rustling branches,—the wind that to their childish fancies had seemed to whisper or sigh wonderful meanings of strange and mysterious things they never could comprehend. And now her frail, trembling form, encircled by Invaloû's strong, protecting arm, appears at the open doorway, and as through her weakness she timidly, hesitatingly shrinks from attempting to descend the flight of steps leading downward to the lawn, Invaloû, against her shy protest, takes her into his arms and carefully bears her down to its green velvety sward, where she stands with

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the air of one attempting to recall some half-forgotten memory.

Suddenly her eyes seek the white stone landing by the lake shore and, with the glee of a child, she cries, "O Invaloû, my Invaloû, I wonder if the broken oar is yet hidden under the landing steps?" With the impetuosity of youth Invaloû rushes off towards the landing, disappearing for a moment among some shrubbery. Presently, with less buoyant steps and holding aloft two pieces of a broken oar, he returns to the expectant group of Frona and their parents, who now were seated under the Bûdas trees. "There, Frona dear," he says, "is a memento of bygone days which afforded Zeydon an excuse to force upon you and me years of unspeakable sorrow and what is more to be deplored, years of grief and despair upon these, our dearly beloved parents. Say now, heart of my heart, how shall we dispose of this reminder of the saddest event of all our lives?"

Taking from Invaloû's hands the broken oar, she for a while regarded it in silence. Slowly a vivid blush overspread her fair young face and, with charming shyness, she smiled into Invaloû's eyes, asking, "Dost thou recall what occasioned the breaking of the oar?"

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Now the hot blood surged into Invạloû's dark face, as with mirthful confusion he replied, "Yes, I do indeed recall the occasion of its breaking."

Turning to his and Froṇa's parents, he explained that on the never to be forgotten afternoon of his and Froṇa's boat ride on the lake they suddenly realized that Diạfon ēvoihạ was touching the horizon and that they were quite a distance from the landing; that Froṇa, more thoughtful than he, besought him to hasten, lest they might be late for the temple service; that, being in a mischievous mood, he suggested that as a reward for his exertion she should give him a kiss, which she was not inclined to bestow; that with assumed indifference as to when they might reach the landing, he rowed with such exasperating tardiness that Froṇa petulantly declared her intention to hereafter boat by herself; that in boyish resentment, he suddenly began to row with such impetuosity that one of the oars snapped in twain and—"Well," he said, "for the consequences of my thoughtless folly, which has so nearly wrecked all our lives, I cannot hope to ever atone."

Exclamations of loving condolence burst from all lips, for all well knew that he had

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meant no wrong, and that his boyish prank had been made to serve another's purpose.

Still Fronạ held in her hands the broken oar, and as Invạloû concluded his recital of an occurrence, which until now was but partly known to any but himself and her, with paling color and in a voice tremulous with emotion she said, "Heart of my heart, if it may please the just and merciful gods to incline the Most High Priest Moûkarạ's mind to release us from the High Priest Zeydon's custody our two lives, like the two halves of this broken oar, may become united. If such a happy conclusion of the sorrow which has so darkened the lives of these beloved ones and our own may arrive, we will with a jewelled band unite these fragments and over our home altar the oar shall be placed as a reminder that hasty speech and inconsiderate actions ever lead to occasions for repentance."

With smiles, tears and caresses her auditors gave unanimous expressions of their approval of her decision.

Through an open window Zeydon, who still was an inmate of the home of the Nyassạs, looked with startled gaze upon the group under the Bûdas trees. Not since the memorable interview between Fronạ, Oûman Mitsạ

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and himself had he beheld the face of the innocent cause of his lamentable departure from the path of rectitude and honor. Now as his sunken, somber eyes rested upon her pallid face and emaciated form, such a wave of self-accusation swept over him that he covered his haggard face with his hands, moaning, "Oh Andûmaṇa, canst thou forgive thy wretched and repentant son? In deepest humility I implore thee for strength that I may make atonement to these wronged ones, whose generous kindness fills my heart with such bitter self-accusation that I sink under the burthen of my shame and guilt."

For a time hot tears of regret and remorse streamed from his eyes, and when at last he raised his head the Nyassaṣ were returning to the house. Lûvon and Tillēne, Dammaṇ and Avaṇnaṇ watched with anxious interest Invaṇloû's attempt to sustain Froṇaṇ's feeble, halting steps; and as Zeydon eagerly scanned her wan, but supremely beautiful face, his ears caught the words, "Nay, my Invaṇloû, thy solicitude exaggerates the gravity of my injury. I may yet grow well and strong: but should I not, thou wilt love me still." In Invaṇloû's tender, earnest eyes she found assurance of lifelong constancy.

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As one stiffening in death, so stiffened Zeydon's form, as he arose to his full height and staggered away from the window. For a brief time his radiant, his better self battled with the dark personality, and in his heart raged all the base emotions of jealousy, hatred and revenge. "This," he muttered through set lips, "was why Frona has ever repulsed my slightest attention. This was why she shrank from me as from some pestilent thing. Fool, fool that I have been to squander upon a shadow the substantial peace and contentment of a clean conscience, the exalted honor of unstained priestly vows!"

With an understanding of the situation came despair so overwhelming as to approach madness. Back and forth, back and forth the frenzied man swiftly paced the length of his spacious apartments, his illness, his weakness forgotten while struggling with the fierce tempest of human passions, which threatened to wreck both his reason and existence.

Those unfortunates who have endured the torments of unrequited love may, to a degree, comprehend the state of Zeydon's mind, but only to a degree; for, aside from other torturing emotions, remorse, like a famished animal,

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gnawed at his heart and lapped his very life blood.

Surely the agony of that hour must have appealed to the pity of the merciful gods, for as he walked into his seething brain came a sense of dullness, of apathy. At last outraged nature could endure no more and in utter exhaustion, he staggered to his couch and fell upon it in a deathlike swoon, where later his faithful attendant Vanetta, found him and, with cries of alarm, quickly brought succor to the senseless man. Gradually, as restoratives brought him back to a state of consciousness, memory revived, and with it came a sense of helplessnese and bewilderment. Until far into the night his thoughts were as Autumn leaves drifting before the wind. Nothing, save a nameless burthen which was crushing his heart, seemed real. "What is it? What is it?" he wearily asked himself. Suddenly he felt himself emerging from this vague mental condition into one of distinct consciousness and clear realization concerning his duty to himself and to others. In deepest humiliation he also realized that he could no longer lean upon his own strength, which was as a broken staff whose fragments pierced his weary hands.

But what should he do? To what source

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should he turn for strength to sustain his lamentable weakness? To Soimạ, the God of the Temple Sanctuary, he dared not appeal, for Soimạ had shown him the danger which threatened him and the way of escape. But he had trusted to his own strength, he had stubbornly, blindly gone his own way, and now again he had fallen under the influence of his baser self, whom he loathed and shrank from, but from whom he found he could not, unaided, free himself.

In the adjoining room a night light dimly burned and at intervals an attendant, with noiseless footsteps, stole to his side to administer to his needs. The night wore on, and slowly into Zeydon's mind grew a resolve that he would go to the Most High Priest Moûkarạ, and to him he would reveal all his sinning, all his suffering, all his futile struggling against that which he could no longer combat. As to the result he scarcely gave a thought: for what could matter any more? Nothing.

Wearied and worn beyond expression, he at last fell into a slumber, so profound that the gray of earliest dawn was heralding the rising of Andûmanạ's glorious abode ere he stirred uneasily and softly called "Vanettạ, Vanettạ

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thou faithful one. Thou mayst now retire for needed rest. But at mid-forenoon we will take passage for Dạo."

Fearing that the mind of the high priest was again wandering, Vanetta was quickly by his side, but Zeydon's quiet manner and faintly smiling lips reassured him, and after receiving further instruction as to the contemplated journey he summoned another attendant and retired.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Now we will recur to the period immediately succeeding the occurrence of the tempest. During all the days and nights of Zeydon's dangerous illness Oûman Mitsą was almost constantly by his side. Through listening to his fevered ravings he came into a clear understanding of the motives which had impelled the unfortunate priest to a course of conduct quite at variance with his calling,—and indeed at variance with his naturally honorable and elevated ideas of right. He learned how the rigid asceticism of the priest had so repressed his naturally fervid nature that when Froną's exceeding beauty and wondrously charming personality awakened in him the emotion of love, his self-deception led him to attribute his interest in her to a higher motive than a selfish desire to have her ever near him. He learned that through all the years of Zeydon's infatuation his passion for his victim was of such an exalted nature that her name on his lips was as though it were the name of a goddess. In Oûmąn Mitsą's mind this strange passage in the life of the austere priest excited a sense of compassion,

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for truly he was only a little less a victim of the force of irresistiible circumstances than were Invạloû and Froṇạ. Though he did not at any time hold Zeydon wholly blameless he came to understand that, in an endeavor to compass certain ends, one may unconsciously grow so mentally and morally blind as to be irresponsible.

Throughout his protracted delirium Zeydon did not recognize even those most familiar to him; thus Oûman Mitsạ, who so carefully watched the stricken man upon whose recovery depended gravest issues, came and went unnoticed by his staring, unseeing eyes. He and the Nyassạs well knew, that should Zeydon pass into the Silence the future of Invạloû and Froṇạ would depend upon the decision of an ecclesiastical court, over which the Most High Priest Moûkarạ presided. But should Zeydon recover and relent in his purpose towards them, and Oûman Mitsạ felt confident that he would relent, then their release through the potent influence of the Most High Priest might be accomplished. Daily, during this trying period, he was in communication with Moûkarạ, whose interest in the peculiar situation at Koidassạ constantly increased, but as yet no steps could be taken to change it.

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As all things, both good and evil, in time come to a conclusion, so at last came a time which brought the blessed assurance that Fronạ would continue to live. A little later Zeydon, who for a day and night had lain almost pulseless and breathless, opened his eyes to see bending over him Ento's most famous physician, and the man of all men whom he most feared and disliked, holding a cordial, which he tenderly and gently pressed the nearly lifeless Zeydon to drink. Too feeble in mind and body to resist or more than dimly to recognize him whom he regarded as his most hostile enemy, he drank the proffered cordial and immediately passed into a long, restful slumber. When he awakened it was to find Fronạ's still lovely mother by the side of his couch.

With gentlest, kindliest speech she expressed her pleasure that he had not passed into the Silence and her hope that ere long he might recover health and strength. Then she arranged his pillows, readjusted his couch covering, bathed his wan face, smoothed his disordered hair and, with the cheering, comforting manner of a mother towards a sick child, quieted his agitated mind and induced him to partake of some nourishment. After this he

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again slept, and when, between midnight and dawn, he aroused to consciousness, he heard an unfamiliar voice say, "Yes, he will, thanks to your unremitting attention more than to my skill, recover." Then another and well remembered voice in most fervent tones murmured, "The merciful gods be praised." Through his slightly unclosed eyelids he saw in the adjoining room Oûman Mitsą and a stately man of middle age, clothed in the garb of a physician.

As to the high priest's reflections at this period and throughout his tedious convalescence we need not be uncertain, for in the record to which I have alluded he wrote much concerning this feature of his lamentable experience. His mind always seems to have been filled with wonder and gratitude over the boundless care and attention he received at the hands of Oûman Mitsą and the Nyassąs. In deepest abasement he wrote, "Oh miserable man that I am. Through shame and remorse I almost perish. For my cruelty, I have from these wronged ones received immeasurable kindness. But for their incessant care and matchless generosity I would now be in the Silence. How shall I undo my iniquitous conduct for which I have no righteous excuse to

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offer? O ye Deific Ones, who behold the follies and offenses of sinful men, aid me, I implore you that I may to the utmost of my ability, make amends for the years of grievous sorrow I have through wilful wickedness occasioned them."

Much more of the same import is contained in Zeydon's confessions, which indeed afford a complete analysis of his character and emotions; and, in so far as I am informed, no one ever has so entirely laid bare every thought and impulse of mind and heart as did this repentant priest, who, in concluding his memoir, wrote, "In deeper anguish of mind and heart than I can express, I write these lines hoping that they may serve as a warning to some weak man, who, after I shall have gone into the Silence, may, as I did unwarily yield to temptation."

I fear that my digressions may somewhat confuse the minds of those who may read this story: yet I must test your forbearance further while, in my uncertain way, I go towards its conclusion.

Oûman Mitsą, who by the mid-forenoon air transport journeyed to Dąo, was greatly surprised and somewhat disconcerted to observe that Zeydon and his attendant Vanettą also

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were passengers. With gentle courtesy he approached the high priest inquiring as to his health and expressing a hope that his Sacredness might speedily recover his accustomed vigor. Zeydon with equal kindliness of manner made suitable replies, but despite his evident attempt to appear composed his demeanor bespoke a mind ill at ease.

Oûman Mitsą, who was a man of extreme delicacy of mind and manner, having begged the high priest to command his service should he require it, retired to the outer promenade, where he occupied himself in pacing back and forth, his mind full of perplexity as to why Zeydon should so suddenly and secretly journey to Dąo.

At near high noon the transport alighted at the station, and Oûman Mitsą hastened to the Most Sacred Temple Zim, hoping to find opportunity for speech with the most high priest ere he should receive Zeydon, who he surmised had come to Dąo for an interview with him. At the conclusion of the high noon service he approached the most high priest and earnestly besought him to grant him an immediate interview, which his Sacredness graciously promised, naming for the purpose the earliest possible hour.

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At mid-afternoon he presented himself at the residence of the most high priest and was at once admitted to a private audience with his Sacredness, from whom he received a most friendly and affectionate welcome. Their greetings being concluded with an encouraging smile Moûkaraṇ inquired, "To what friendly wind am I indebted for having blown my dear kinsman in my direction? Is it that you would discuss some weighty matter concerning the government or perchance some interest of our holy religion? Or is it that you would speak of your unhappy relatives the Nyassaṣ that I am favored with your ever welcome presence?"

No further urging was necessary to induce Oûman Mitsaṇ to lay before the most high priest the sum of the information he had acquired concerning the high priest and the Nyassaṣ. As he related the substance of Zeydon's delirious ravings through which he had learned the story of his temptation and his wrongdoing, which had resulted in years of utter misery to the Nyassaṣ, and finally in Invaṇloû's and Froṇa's narrow escape from death, he became so indignantly eloquent that Moûkaraṇ's usually tranquil manner grew quite disturbed. But as the relation of events pro-

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ceeded, gradually leading to an explanation of Zeydon's reprehensible conduct and his present pitiable state Moûkarạ threw up his hands exclaiming: "My dear Oûman, you so bewilder me that I find it difficult to determine as to who is the more to be commiserated—Zeydon, or the Nyassạs. Truly, thy heart is so generous that I fear it sets thy judgment at fault." And he smiled indulgently.

For a moment Oûman Mitsạ showed some confusion, then with an apologetic air he said, "I beg that Your Sacredness will bear with me for I confess that of late my experiences have so put out of joint all my ideas of right and wrong that scarcely can I determine which is the more to be pitied—Zeydon or the Nyassạs."

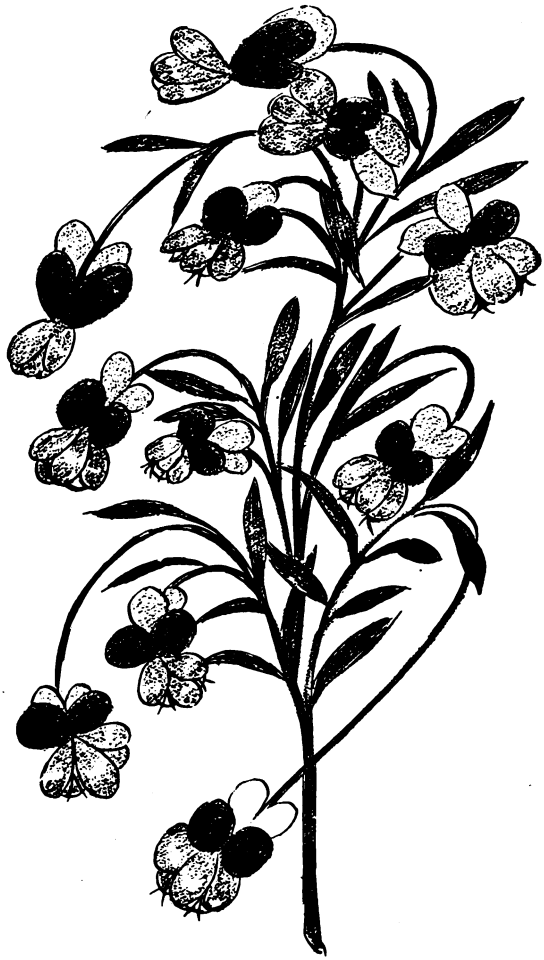
At this moment the silvery trill of a tiny bell notified the most high priest that some one desired admission. In response to his signalled reply, an attendant entered, bearing to His Sacredness a folded paper which, with a repressed exclamation he read. Then, turning to Oûman Mitsạ, he said: "You will retire to the adjoining apartment. One to whom I shall accord immediate audience awaits permission to enter." With a peculiar smile lighting up his fine face, in a low tone he said, "May the

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Deific Ones inspire me with wisdom, for Zeydon approaches. You will await my summons." And as Oûman Mitsą hastily disappeared the High Priest Zeydon entered.

Yes, it was Zeydon, but Zeydon so changed in appearance and bearing that for a moment Moûkarą gazed upon him in mute surprise. As with bowed head and halting steps the trembling priest drew near and knelt at Moûkarą's feet, he presented so piteous a spectacle that touched with profound compassion the most high priest stooped to raise him from his humble position. But with gentle resistance Zeydon put away his hands, crying in broken, tremulous tones: "I am unworthy to even kneel at thy feet. I am too impure for thy clean hands to touch me. Against Andûmaną and the Deific Ones I have sinned I fear past forgiveness. I am a most wretched and guilty man, and am no longer entitled to serve in the temple of Andûmaną, the Most High, Sinless One, Most Sacred One. I have not come to thee hoping for or desiring pity or favor for myself: for I have so sinned against my vows of consecration that I dare not hope for pity or forgiveness from either gods or men. I have come to thy Most Sacred Sacredness to lay bare before thee my breaking heart

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A Flower of Ento, Name Unknown.

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and, if possible, to undo a most grievous wrong which I have committed. Have I thy permission for further speech?"

While Zeydon spoke into the Most High Priest's face a strange expression had grown, an expression as fixed as that of a statue, as exalted as that of a god.

In my attempt to describe Zeydon's interview with the Most High Priest, I am aware that I am encroaching upon forbidden ground, and also, I confess, I am drawing slightly upon natural inferences. At the same time, after having read the record of Zeydon's expiation, including his interview with the Most High Priest Moûkaraṇ, I feel that I might find justification for saying much more than I shall trust myself to express.

With bowed head the suppliant high priest awaited permission for further speech, but as the Most High Priest neither moved or uttered a word, Zeydon slowly raised his head and in amazement gazed upon a face that was, indeed, as the face of a god.

With head thrown slightly backward and his large, dark, wide-open eyes gazing upward with an intensity that seemed as though they might pierce the very walls of Astranolạ Moûkaraṇ, in a listening attitude, for a time re-

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mained motionless. Suddenly a rush of color suffused his dark face, and with a slight start he aroused from his intense reverie. Turning toward Zeydon, in gentlest tones he said:

"Speak, thou bruised and broken child of the One who created thee, as He creates all His children—imperfect—that through trials and much suffering they may grow strong in all the virtues, and thus may learn to love one another."

Then Zeydon, in utter self-abasement, told to Moûkaraṇ the story of his life. How with the high enthusiasm of youth he had served his novitiate. How through a misconception of the finer meanings of our holy religion he had grown arrogant, unsympathetic and intolerant: regarding the priesthood as the embodiment, not only of sacred authority, but as possessing the absolute right to control the affairs of those under their charge. How through his life of rigid adherence to the beliefs and rites of what he had conceived as the true expression of our holy religion, he had grown so self-righteous that he had thought himself beyond the touch of human emotions and frailties. That, while regarding himself as invulnerable to the weaknesses of many men suddenly and, strange to say, unconsciously, he had fallen

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from the calm of an emotionless existence to the depths of an unreasoning passion for a young girl, whose innocence, wondrous beauty and singular charm of manner led all hearts captive.

Without the slightest attempt to palliate his wrongdoing, he laid bare to the most high priest an account of his struggles against the irresistible passion, which had held him in such complete subjection, that he possessed no strength of will to even attempt to release himself from a course of conduct that he fully realized was utterly ruinous. Of his remorse and wretchedness of mind he spoke with shrinking horror, and, at the conclusion of his tragic recital, which included his injury and long illness, and Fronạ's injury and narrow escape from death, in tones of indescribable anguish, he brokenly said·

"Most Sacred Sacredness, I have laid bare before you my mind and heart. I have withheld nothing concerning my shameful disregard of the duties of our holy religion, or of my treachery toward those entrusted to my care. I deserve no mercy. I desire none. I have sinned: let my expiation be swift and in accordance with my deserts." And, with his

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face buried in his hands, he awaited his sentence.

Bending over the crouching, trembling man Moûkaraṇ drew his hands away from his tear-stained, haggard face, saying softly, tenderly:

"Arise my brother. Thou hast indeed deeply sinned and thou hast also deeply suffered. Through thy sinning and thy suffering thou hast learned a lesson, which will fit thee for an understanding of the sins and sorrows of others. The fittest expiation thou canst make to Andûmaṇa and the Deific Ones, and to those whom thou hast so wronged, is to return to and serve faithfully those who have so long been under thy charge. As thou art one of Andûmaṇa's children, so are they children of the same creative power. Thus, are they thy brothers and thy sisters, who have a right to claim protection from thee.

"The wrongs thou hast committed against the Nyassaṣ thou canst not undo, but thou canst undo the wrongs that have found lodgment in thy own mind and heart, and in righting the wrongs of thy own nature thou wilt find means of atonement for the sufferings thou hast occasioned others.

"Thou sayst that thy passion for the Daughter of the Nyassaṣ hath burned thy heart to

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ashes. Let no mischance enkindle them. Thou art not the first priest, and alas, thou art not the last who, through weakness rather than through deliberate willfulness hath suffered, will suffer and cause others to suffer for unrighteous conduct.

"As Andûmaṇa hath signified that He desires in His Temples no unwilling servitors, let the children of the Nyassąs be, as thou desirest, released from their novitiate. And, as through the disastrous consequences of the tempest they already are with their parents, let them remain with them.

"Nay, my brother, say no more. Thou owest me no thanks. As thou knowest it is not I who judge thee, but those who not only read the words of thy lips, but the thoughts back of thy words. And if Andûmaṇa and His Messengers, the Deific Ones can, because thou art possessed of human and not of godlike attributes, forgive thee, it would illy become me who am but thy elder brother to deal with thee harshly. Ere thou shalt go into the Silence thou mayst find ample occasions for making to the Deific Ones and to those in thy charge atonement for thy offenses. Let thy love for all living things equal thy former indifference; for remember, that He Who hath created thee

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hath also out of himself created all that is: and thus thy love is as fully due the created as the Creator. Be to thy people the embodiment of all that is loving, just, kind, merciful and true. Open thy mind and heart to thy sanctuary god Soimạ, whom I know of as one able and willing to guide thee to righteous ends. Guard thy thoughts, acts and words that henceforth thy life may be as blameless in thine own eyes as thou wouldst have it appear to gods and men. Thus with thy mind and heart purified as by fire, thou shalt ere going into the Silence arrive at peace with the Deific Ones and with thyself."

He ceased, and Zeydon endeavored to speak, but his agitation so overwhelmed him that he could only brokenly murmur: "May the Deific Ones do to thee as thou hast done to me, and in proportion as I may deserve Their mercy and thy beneficence even so may my recompense be."

Then, with a profound obeisance he turned away and left the most high priest's presence. Until he disappeared Moûkarạ's pitying eyes followed his prematurely aged and enfeebled form, and a troubled and perplexed expression, like a cloud shadow, swept over his usually serene face. In a low, fervent

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tone he murmured: "Andûmaṇa, Creator and preserver of Thy children, I would that I might ere I shall go into the oblivion of Death solve the meaning of existence which overwhelms me with its mystery. Through the Deific Ones, who are Thy servitors, Thou dost from time to time reveal to Thy chosen children expressions of Thy will; and I, the humblest of these, adore Thee, that Thou hast created me with sufficient discernment to catch even faintest meanings of Thy mind, which is too exalted for any one less wise than Thyself to comprehend. I do not question Thy wisdom, Thy will or any attribute of Thy infinity but, O Thou Mightiest One, as my limited thought strives to reach out towards the height of Thy majesty and immeasurable glory, in my weakness and inability to transcend the limitations it hath pleased Thee to impose upon me as upon all created things, I cry unto Thee, Who knowest my secret thoughts, for forgiveness, if in my presumption and ignorance I abuse the privilege of my office. Am I, O Thou sinless One, impure in mind if for yonder crushed and broken child of Thine my heart is full of pity and tenderest sympathy? Thou knowest his sin; thou knowest the anguish of his mind and heart and the agony

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of his repentance, and surely Thy pitiful and divine compassion is immeasurably greater than mine, who am but the echo of Thy thought."

At this moment slanting beams of Andûmaṇa's glorious abode penetrated the silken window drapery, bathing the great apartment and the most high priest in a soft golden radiance. In a state of intense exaltation with shining eyes and face aglow, he prayed: "I am Thine, out of Thyself. Thou didst speak me into existence and I know that it is for me, as far as I may, to do Thy will and to question not that which I am not wise enough to comprehend. Rạû, Rạû, Rạû."

In an attitude of deepest reverence, for a brief time, Moûkarạ stood with bowed head and closed eyes. Then, seating himself—he summoned Oûman Mitsạ, who with a most anxious expression of countenance entered his presence. With a reassuring smile the most high priest exclaimed:

"It is for thee and me to praise Andûmaṇa and the Deific Ones who, through the fury of the tempest, have shown their invincible might; who, through the righteousness of their purposes, have made known their abhorrence of evil doing; who, through their

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love and pitiful tenderness for the weakness of the erring, have bestowed strength and forgiveness; who, through their divine sympathy for the unmerited suffering of the innocent and wronged, are heralding days of peace and happiness whose completeness will fill to repletion their remaining years."

Of Zeydon's confession and of his strong desire to make reparation for his transgressions against both divine and civil laws he fully informed Oûman Mitsa. Of his own desire that he and the Nyassas should, in their mutual happiness strive to forgive and, as far as possible, forget Zeydon's offense, he spoke with strong feeling and impressive earnestness.

"Remember," he said, "that they who will not forgive the transgressions of another have no right to ask of Andûmana and the Deific Ones forgiveness of their own transgressions, and that one is ever more blessed in forgiving than in being forgiven. Oûman, my dearest kinsman, Andûmana created thee with a nature so strong, so steadfast, that in thy progress from childhood to manhood and onward to the present time, thy feet have not tripped over the rough places upon which so many weak, unfortunates have fallen. According

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with the measure of thy strength let the measure of thy love, mercy and tender forbearance be.

"Tymonas, the great god of the inner sanctuary of this Most Sacred Temple Zim hath taught me many things, the chiefest of which is that in Love is included all the attributes of Andûmaṇa, the Infinite One."

"And now I charge thee Oûman, that in the innermost of thy mind and heart thou shalt secretly and sacredly cherish that which I am about to say to thee. Thou knowest Oûman, how the sorrowful children of our beloved Ento are ever reaching out after their dear dead. Oûman, thou knowest, for ever since thy adored wife Zoûlēne went from thee thy entire days have been days of sadness. Thy tears, dear Oûman, attest that still thy grief cuts into thy heart as poignantly as though thy sorrowful bereavement had come to thee but yesterday.

"Of thy past life I know much; of mine thou knowest but little. That thou mayst intelligently read one page of its earliest history, I will relate to thee what none but Andûmaṇa and the gods are cognizant of. Of our ancestry and of the vast wealth with which our parents endowed thee and me thou knowest;

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but thou dost not know that in my mature manhood I loved with all the ardor of an impassioned nature a maiden as fair and sweet as the opening buds of the beauteous Roiṇa. Isạlētạ Roûenēdạs was—What! Thou rememberest her? Thou wert but a mere lad, scarcely vodû elipsạạ* of age, yet thou rememberest her? Ah yes! she was very, very beautiful in both mind and person. Then thou mayst also remember that my stern and unyielding predecessor, the Most High Priest Talsạ Amûna chose her as a sacrifice to Lafon Gilnas, the dread God of Darkness who rules ever the Realm of †Yento. Should I attempt to recount to thee the terror, horror and agony of mind of my poor Isạlētạ, and of all who loved her, when it was made known that she to appease the Evil God Lafon Gilnas, must go through the fire into the Silence it would but add to thy and my already heavy burthen of unceasing regret and sorrow. So I shall only say that with Isạlētạ's ashes I urned the ashes of my consumed hopes and aspirations concerning the interests of life, and gave myself and my possessions to such service

*Five year old.

†Abode of rebellious gods and goddesses.

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as the Deific Ones might decree. In time I succeeded the most high priest, Talsạ Amûnạ, and praise be to Andûmanạ! through the great God Tẏmonas it was given to me to proclaim to the children of Ento their deliverance from an observance of the dread sacrificial rite, which Andûmanạ perceived was a heavier obligation than His children could longer endure. Alas! it came too late to save my Isạlētạ and my only consolation is to bathe with my tears the urn which holds her sacred ashes, and as far as I may, to lighten the burthens of those whose sorrows, like my own, rob life of its chiefest blessing—peace of mind.

"In laying bare to thee my mind and heart I have in mind a purpose, which I fear I shall not be able to make clear even to thy comprehension. As thou knowest the high priests of our holy religion are chosen because of a certain fitness for the office. It, for a sufficient reason, hath not pleased Andûmanạ that all of His children shall be able to hold converse with the Deific Ones, or with the gods and goddesses who are His Messengers and who also are the servitors of His purposes; hence only those whom He has created in accordance with His design are fitted and selected to fill

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the sacred office of most high priest, and to serve as high priests in various temples.

"Early in my novitiate it became apparent that I was specially endowed with the ability to both see and converse with the Deific Ones and with other dwellers in Astranolạ, and for that and other cogent reasons, at the death of Talsạ Amûnạ I was chosen to succeed him as most high priest of this Most Sacred Temple Zim from whence when Death shall seize me I shall go—I shall go—Ah, what shall I say to thee Oûman? Perchance my constant brooding over the strange mystery of life and death inclines me to fanciful thoughts: yet ever I accept only that which appeals to such reason as I possess; and when I tell thee Oûman, that lately the great god Tŷmonas of the inner sanctuary hath revealed to me something so marvelous that I scarcely dare think of it, thou wilt not I pray think that my mind is astray.

"What he hath spoken to me is more an intimation, than a clear revelation that in some coming time, a truth so overwhelming will be revealed to the children of Ento that sorrow and despair over the loss of their dear ones will no longer darken their lives. It is, that all who have been thought of as forever lost

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will be found again, and that the dead shall live and the living shall not die!

"What meaning these strange sayings may hold I know not, for I have been forbidden to question the marvel of it and to be content with that which hath been revealed to me.

"Oûman, I fear that thy thoughts are saying to thee that I am no longer of sane mind. Then what wilt thou think when I tell thee that at times I seem to behold my lost Isąlētą, as youthful as when her young life was a part of my young life? Radiant, smiling, she reaches out her dear hands to me calling, 'Come! Come!' and I for very joy swoon into unconsciousness from which when I arouse, I seem to have dreamed that I have beheld my lost love! Oûman, my kinsman, my friend this to thee is as the wild imagining of a diseased fancy: and I cannot declare that it is not. But to me it is so real at the time that it is as though I gaze upon the living, breathing, loving Isąlētą whose dear memory is my most sacred, my most valued possession."

While Moûkarą impetuously gave utterance to this strange and startling story, into Oûman Mitsą's dark eyes and handsome face grew an expression of wonder, then of such radiant joy that suddenly his countenance assumed an ap-

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pearance of youth and of ecstasy, which so transfigured him that years seemed to have dropped away from him like a worn garment. Then, with eager haste, he in turn related his own marvelous experience of the night of his return to Amạtû. "If thou art mad," he cried, "then so am I. And if madness may so illumine life's dreary, darkened pathway that through its mazes one may catch even faintest glimpses of the unreal images of our dear dead, then I pray the pitiful gods that we may remain dreamers of unrealities. And if that which thou hast received from the great God Tŷmonas may hold aught of significance, O Sacredness, what meaning may not it hold for thee and me? At thought of what it may mean I grow so faint that my heart is well-nigh stilled."

Oblivious of passing time these two visionary but exalted and sincerely pious personages exchanged mutual confidences, through which they revealed to each other their hope, if not actual belief, that in some coming time Andûmaṇạ, who executes that which He wills would to the priceless blessing of life add greater length of days,—days so prolonged as to become continuous. In records written by both the most high priest and Oûman Mitsạ

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there are even strange hints of a continuous existence after death of the body of that which these two wise men assumed to be the intelligent, indestructible life principle. Of course we, who cannot hold converse with the Deific Ones, cannot be expected to realize the possibility, much less the probability, of such a marvelous conception; but to me and to those interested in curious states of mind, these records possess a peculiar fascination; and I confess, that could I conceive of life without the accompaniment of physical form, I too might fall to dreaming baseless dreams, and thus become no wiser than others, who, while reaching after unrealities oft times lose consciousness of present good.

Ere the two enthusiasts realized that other duties demanded attention the last faint afterglow of Andûmaṇa's shining abode was paling from the sky and twilight was hovering over Dạo. From Zim's wondrous temple bells musical notes,—soft, sweet, penetrating,—bade Info oovistû* to departing day; and suddenly myriad lights from towers, domes and private residences turned darkness into radiant light. Oûman Mitsạ, with apologies for

*Until thou returnest.

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his protracted interview hastily made ready to depart, but Moûkaraạ with gentle insistence detained him, saying: "Ever, dear Oûman, thou hast been more in my mind than I have found time or occasion to express. But now that mutual interests and sympathy draw us so near each other, it will remain with thee to afford me the happiness of frequently seeing thy face and of having speech with thee. Go now, and bear with thee my blessing for thyself and thy dear friends, the Nyassạs. Say to the youth and maiden that the Deific Ones, who have them in their keeping desire that they shall not in their joy forget the sorrowful one, whose darkened life they may in a measure, brighten; and that when their two lives shall have become wholly united, I shall regard it as a privilege and pleasure if I may bestow my blessing upon their union. And I pray that the loving ones of Astranolạ may so brighten and bless their coming years that they may, with softened memories, recall the good, and not the evil, which hath so darkened the later days of their youth."

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CHAPTER XV.

To the countless years of Ento's existence another year added itself, and for its children it was a year full to repletion with joy and sorrow, which ever are close comrades. In the wake of the tempest death had gathered a plenteous harvest, leaving in the minds and hearts of the survivors griefs which could end only when they too should be called into the Silence. Throughout the devastated district the work of restoration was in active progress. Northward from Lēonitą Tŷlû the massive walls of the new Moutsen ken ąvą outlined themselves against the horizon, and ere long a stately and spacious structure would replace the ruin, which was all that was left of the tempest-wrecked Litzen Rinadą. The beautiful Temple Residence neared completion, and a little later it was presented to the High Priest Zeydon as a love offering from his people.

Yes, certainly it was Zeydon, who with tremulous voice and most gracious speech made to his people grateful acknowledgment of their munificent kindness to him, but Zeydon so changed in appearance and demeanor

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as to be a most pleasing reminder of his former arrogant and unloveable self.

My readers will understand that it was not until some years after Zeydon's death that any one save the Nyassąs and those connected with the deplorable affair became aware of the secret of his unhappy life, and not until now have its tragic features been made known. So to all who knew him it was a source of constant wonder as to how greatly the high priest was changed. Previous to his illness he had ever been feared and servilely obeyed; but since his recovery his gentle beneficence, his self-abnegation and his evident interest in the welfare of his people, called forth fullest responses of loving reverence; and when after years of usefulness as counsellor and comforter of those in his charge he suddenly passed into the Silence their minds and hearts were filled with tender regret and a sense of personal loss. *Mûen elipsąą previous to that sad event he united in holy marriage Invąloû and Froną. It was on the second anniversary of the tempest which so nearly destroyed Fronąs life that he pronounced them husband and wife. The marriage was

*Six Ento years.

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celebrated in Yaffą ą lûŷtos where as children Invąloû and Froną had served as offering bearers; and the numerous guests who witnessed the ceremony long remembered with a sense of awe that as the high priest drew together the trembling hands of the groom and bride, into his upraised eyes and face came a strange, exalted, glorified expression. As in fervent tones he entreated Andûmaną and the Deific Ones to bless and protect them until the closing of their lives, his manner was that of one communing with the gods.

At Amątû and Koidassą Invąloû and Froną were equally at home as was also Oûman Mitsą who made Froną his legalized heiress and upon whom he lavished the affection of a parent for a dearly beloved daughter. Between the two estates which nearly adjoined each other, there was constant interchange of hospitality, and through years of unbroken happiness the shadows of past sorrows grew so dim that at times the participants in the tragedy which had so nearly wrecked their lives were able to wholly forgive and partly to forget.

The years passed. To Invąloû and Froną came two children, a boy and a girl, counterparts of their parents. Zeydon, the firstborn,

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a sturdy lad strong and lithe as a young *Feltąh and the image of his dark skinned, superbly handsome father became as hands and feet to the prematurely aged high priest who after Invąloû and Froną's union passed at will, to and fro, between the Temple Residence and Koidassą which to the lonely man had become a second home. Always a welcome and honored guest, his greatest happiness was with the children, whom with scrupulous care he instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion. They in turn came to regard him as a special protector to whom on all occasions of childish discontent or perplexity they appealed as to an indisputable authority.

Zeydonąą, the girl, fair and graceful as a Rodel bud swaying upon the bosom of some rippling lake, was as the very light of his adoring eyes and the life of his loving heart in which he enshrined her as a jewel beyond price.

To some critical minds it may appear strange that both or either of the children were given the name of one who had brought into the lives of their parents and grand-

*Resembles a deer.

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parents such immeasurable misery. A fragment of a family council may lead to enlightenment.

About Froṇą's couch were grouped Oûman Mitsą, Lûvon, Tillēne, Dammą and Avąnną, while with a most perplexed expression of countenance Invąloû paced to and fro pausing occasionally in his promenade to offer a suggestion to which the assemblage turned deaf ears. A boy child who from the embracing arms of Avąnną regarded with the gravity ever present in the eyes of infants the somewhat excited group was the subject under consideration.

For the infant numberless names had been proposed and promptly rejected and the thirty day-old heir of the Nyassąs bade fair to go nameless, when Froną, who hitherto had taken no part in the discussion, with the decision of a proud young mother, announced that she had selected a name for her son.

"That we may show to the Deific Ones," she said; "that we forgive as we all desire to be forgiven, and to——to——the high priest that we no longer regard him as aught but a trusted and beloved friend, the boy shall be named Zeydon Invąloû."

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For a little this declaration so astounded her hearers that no one uttered a word, then simultaneously there was vociferous and unanimous approval of her choice, and at once the infant's name was recorded as Zeydon Invạloû Nyassạ.

Ere the commotion over Froṇạ's decision was at an end the high priest was announced and was made acquainted with the new Zeydon whom he took into his arms and blessed with such fervor that his and the eyes of those who reverently joined in the Rạû, Rạû, Rạû of his earnest prayer to the Deific Ones were wet with tears of tenderest emotion expressing more forcibly than speech that priest and participants in the little ceremony had grown to be of one mind and one heart.

Two years later the infant girl arrived, and Invạloû claimed the right to name her. The thought of all was that the name of the child would be Froṇạ Tillēne, or Froṇạ Avạnṇạ, so they were greatly amazed when with shining eyes and face aglow with emotion he took the child into his arms, saying: "To further show our gratitude to Andûmaṇạ, the Creator who hath given into our keeping another child of His and our love and to the gracious gods whose protection hath so blest the union of

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this dear spouse and myself, and"—In answer to Fronạ's out-reaching hands, entreating eyes and tremulous lips, he paused to kiss her lovely face into smiles. Then he proceeded: "As I was about to say,—to also assure our high priest that as a dear counsellor, guide and more than friend he stands pre-eminent in our affectionate regard, I propose that this second Fronạ who in her infantile features repeats the incomparable charms of her adorable mother, shall be named Fronạ Zeydonạạ."

This announcement so surprised Fronạ and the grandparents that they only could look their astonishment. As for Oûman Mitsạ, the calm and complacent expression of his countenance afforded ground for suspicion that he had been taken into Invạloû's confidence. It was but for an instant that the silence remained unbroken. Then with much enthusiasm all concerned declared that it was the fittest and prettiest of all names.

Zeydon who had been invited to be present on this notable occasion and who appeared to be overcome by this added demonstration of goodwill, with an air of timidity approached and took from Invạloû's arms the cooing, flower-like creature whose golden hair clung in tiny ringlets to its fair forehead and whose

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empurpled eyes gazed into his with the peculiar expression of the newly created. After one strange, searching glance into the child's face he stood with closed eyes and prayed but no word issued from his lips. They, who with reverent awe, looked upon the rapt face of the high priest thought that they understood. And when with whitened lips he touched the forehead of the smiling infant and laid it gently in the arms of its tearful mother, and with a silent inclination of his whitened head to all, left the room and returned to his lonely home, they thought that they understood. Did they? I believe not. Only the pitying and all-knowing Creator and His special messengers, the Deific Ones, could have understood the man who in the Inner Sanctuary of Yaffą ą Lûŷtos knelt the night through praying a wordless prayer. And when in the gray of dawn the Sanctuary God Soimą, softly whispered: "I have watched with thee; despair not. When thy suffering shall have equalled thy sinning, peace will abide in thy heart," Zeydon, humbly answered, "May it be so."

It was a graceful and gracious act, the naming of the infant daughter Zeydonąą; and to my mind in no other way could the chasm, which for so long had yawned between the

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high priest and the Nyassạs, have been so completely bridged over. It was to Zeydon a full assurance that for the wrongs and wretchedness he had inflicted upon these admirable persons, he was entirely forgiven. Could he have so freely and fully forgiven himself, he would have escaped years of self-accusation and bitter humiliation, which, ere he passed into the Silence, purified and exalted his nature to a degree seldom attained by Andûmaṇạ's sinful children.

The conclusion of a story, especially of a true story, as Records of the Most High Priest Moûkaraṇạ, of the High Priest Zeydon, and of Oûman Mitsạ and others declare this to be, is to me as sad as taking leave of those one loves and leaves forever; and I confess that as my pen traces these closing lines my heart beats but faintly and I shrink from writing the last word as I might shrink from the thrust of a knife. As the end is inevitable I shall afford you, my readers and myself one more glimpse of the dear ones of Koidassạ, of Amạtû and of the High Priest Zeydon.

Across the Temple garden the last beams of Diạfon ēvoihạ glanced in rays of golden light. From the great open doorway of the

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Temple Residence the High Priest with a smile on his face and an expectant look in his fine eyes goes hastily towards Koidassą. Now he pauses and in a clear musical voice calls: "Zeydonąą, Zeydonąą," and in a listening attitude waits. He does not pause long for, like a flash of light two swiftly flying feet carry a golden-haired, purple-eyed, Froną to his eagerly outreaching arms; and as he catches her up to his breast he murmurs: "So like thy mother, so like thy mother," my little Roiną bud who art life of my broken life, heart of my broken heart! Truly the merciful gods are most kind to me who have so little deserved such a benediction as thou art." Then he sets her upon her feet and hand in hand slowly they wander through the quiet garden paths. As they gather red and golden blooms for the altar offering Zeydonąą prattles to the high priest's untiring ears of the wonders of the flowers and birds of Amątû and of the dearest of all kinsmen, Oûman Mitsą who tells her marvelous stories of a time when boys like her brother Zeydon and little girls like herself were sacrificed to Andûmaną and the gods. As she recalls Oûman Mitsą's recitals her crimson lips quiver and her ready tears, like diamonds, fall on her

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armful of fragrant blooms. The high priest shudders as with quick, protective movement he gathers child and flowers into his arms and soothingly says: "Praise be to Andûmaṇą, the most high, thou art safe! Thou art safe my priceless treasure! The cruel knife and torturing flames are not for thee or for any of Ento's children." Then as though communing with himself, he murmured: "And since through His immeasurable love and mercy for His own He no longer demands the last test of obedience to His commands, who knows but that in some coming time, aye, at any time, He may vouchsafe to thee my precious one, and to all His children the gift of all gifts: continued existence here or elsewhere."

Zeydonąą listens to the high priest's strange words which she does not at all comprehend. But perceiving that he is greatly moved she draws one soft white arm about his neck and rests her lovely childish face against his own and he is comforted.

Diąfon ēvoihą has vanished below the horizon and through the afterglow of its glory the lamps of Astranolą are faintly gleaming. The temple bells of Lēonitą Tŷlû peal out their far-reaching silvery tones calling to the evening service the children of Andûmaṇą the

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Infinite One, whose creative power hath called into existence all that anywhere is.

Coming from Koidassą are Oûman Mitsą, Lûvon, and Tillēne, Dammą, Avąnną, and the lad Zeydon, who rushes hither and thither in a futile effort to capture swiftly flitting *Eydas, the eyes of his grandparents following his graceful movements with adoring glances. A little further away are Invąloû and Froną, whose slightly halting steps her husband sustains with the tenderness of a lover.

As they near Yaffą ą Lûŷtos, suddenly, with smiling lips and attentive manner they all pause, for on the quiet air the musical prattle of a child is borne to their listening ears. A moment later, from a garden path the high priest, bearing in his arms Zeydonąą and her armful of red and golden blooms, comes towards them. The gems in the golden fillet confining his abundant, whitening hair are no more brilliant than are his dark, fine eyes which seem to have drawn into their depths the radiance of the vanished beams of Diąfon ēvoihą. Against his dusky face is pressed the flower face of Zeydonąą, her golden locks

*A large night moth.

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flowing over his shoulders and mingling with his own. And as he and his lovely burthen approach the waiting group they present a picture to be remembered in after days. Reluctantly yielding to the outreaching arms of her proud and fond grandsire his beloved namesake he gently greets his friends whose affectionate salutations afford abundant evidence of their tender regard for him.

Then with parting caresses from Zeydon and Zeydonąą he goes towards his residence and the children with their flower offering hasten towards the rear entrance of the temple to take their places in the procession.

As the children disappear Invąloû in a low voice, says "Froną dear, in our children's lives is a repetition of the earliest days of our own." And Froną replies: "Yes, heart of my heart; but praise be to Andûmaną and the Deific Ones, to them the horror of the sacrifice will ever be unknown. And against an experience such as we and those who so love us have endured, may the divine and gracious gods defend them."

With faces clouded by memories of bygone days they follow into the temple Oûman Mitsą and their parents.

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Now, as the low plaintive strains of the voûhoidą awaken the quiet of the spacious and very beautiful Temple the further door way opens and the high priest in his flowing robes enters and approaches the great circular Altar rearing its snowy beauty towards the red and golden crystal Diąfon ēvoihą. And as the mingled tones of the voûhoidą and the melodious voices of the singers swell into a grand volume of harmonious sounds, the youthful offering bearers laden with grains, fruits and flowers enter and surround the altar.

Silently the children stand awaiting the appointed moment of the offering; and as upon one golden-haired child the eyes of the high priest rest, into his face grows an expression of immeasurable tenderness and deepest humility and under his breath, he murmurs:

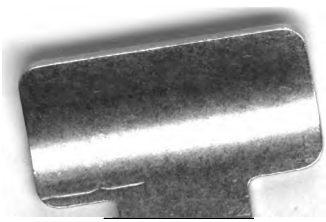
"Though I have greatly, grievously sinned, Thy love and mercy, O Thou Infinite One, are mightier than my transgressions. And in Thine own time and way Thou wilt show me that Thou hast forgiven me and Thou wilt wholly heal my sorely wounded heart and I shall find rest—and peace."

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